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THE

BAPTIST MANUAL:

A SELECTION FROM THE SERIES OF PUBLICATIONS

OF THE

BAPTIST GENERAL TRACT SOCIETY,

DESIGNED FOR THE USE OF FAMILIES;

AND AS AN EXPOSITION OF THE DISTINGUISHING SENTIMENTS OF THE DENOMINATION.

I praise you—that ye—keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you. 1 Cor. xi. 2.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED AT THE TRACT DEPOSITORY,

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1835.

PREFACE.

The object of the Board of Managers of the Baptist General Tract Society, in sending forth the following selection from the Series of its publications, is three-fold. They wish to engage, more widely, the attention of their brethren in the United States to the Society, and to awaken an interest in its behalf, by diffusing a knowledge of the character of its publications; to furnish to members of Baptist Churches, and to Baptist families, a volume of convenient size, which shall be profitable for doctrine, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness;—a volume, which, with the Divine blessing, may promote their growth in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; and to furnish to those who may be seeking information respecting our views and practices as a denomination, the means of acquaintance with those views and practices, and with the grounds on which they rest.

Agreeing with the great body of evangelical Christians of other denominations, in the fundamental principles of doctrinal belief, the Baptists yet differ from many of them in their views of church order; and in one important respect, that of Christian Baptism—they differ from them all.

With every other Protestant denomination they take their stand against the corruptions of the church of Rome; but considering Infant Baptism, both in the subject and the mode, as it is practiced, to be one of those

corruptions, they bear their testimony on this point alike against the Papist, the Protestant, and the Dissenter.

They believe, with their Protestant brethren of every name, that the Bible is a sufficient, and the *only* rule of faith and practice. With them they repair to the law and the testimony for light and direction: but they are unable to find a Divine sanction for the baptism of any but those who believe; or authority for considering the use of water in any other form than that of immersion to be baptism. And feeling the obligation to walk in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, they fear to follow the example of their brethren of other denominations any further than they can see them treading in the footsteps of Christ.

The separate position which the views of the Baptist churches in regard to this ordinance, have obliged them to take with respect to the churches of every other denomination, has ever exposed them to animadversion: their principles have often been misrepresented; and they are, even at this day, notwithstanding that the Baptist denomination is now the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, extensively misunderstood.

The Board have thought it due to the denomination and to the cause of truth, to furnish to the honest enquirer the means of an acquaintance with our sentiments, in a convenient form: they have accordingly included in the following selection, such tracts from their series as will give the views of the denomination on most, if not all, those points on which they have been misapprehended. The candid will here learn, that although we consider immersion essential to baptism, and baptism essential to church-membership, we do not consider it essential to salvation: that although we are strenuous for the preservation of soundness in the faith, we yet have no fellowship with the faith which is not produc-

tive of good works; and that although we are firm in the conviction that "the purpose of God according to election"—"the election of grace"—will stand, we yet believe that it is a part of his purpose to employ the instrumentality of his saints in gathering his elect into his kingdom; and that therefore it is as much their duty to labor for the conversion of the world as it would be if he had left us to gather a knowledge of his purpose solely from his commands.

This volume is dedicated to the cause of *Truth and Piety;* and commended to the candid perusal of all of every name who cherish a love of the one and the practice of the other; with the prayer that it may minister to the glory of the Saviour, by bringing his people to a close conformity to his image and his will. C.

Philadelphia, March 11, 1835.

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THE GREAT QUESTION

ANSWERED.

And he brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved—Acts xvi. 30, 31.

THE GREAT QUESTION ANSWERED.

PART I.

THAT great numbers of people, even in this Christian ized country, are ignorant in the way of salvation, is too evident to be denied. It is manifestly no part of their concern, any more than if they were in no danger of being lost, or there had never been such a thing as salvation heard of. Nor is this true only of weak and illiterate people; men, who in all other concerns are wise, in these, things have no knowledge or sense to direct them. The evil, therefore, cannot be ascribed to *simple* ignorance, which, as far as it goes, tends to excuse; but to be *willingly* ignorant, saying unto God, "Depart from us—we desire, not the knowledge of thy ways."

God, however, has a witness in every man's conscience. Every man, whatever he may pretend, feels himself to be a sinner, and to need forgiveness. Ignorant and idolatrous as the Philippian Jailer had been all his life, yet, when death looked him in the face, he trembled and cried for mercy. And if it were thus with the heathen, much more with those who have been educated under the light of revelation. The most careless and thoughtless cannot stand the approach of death. The courage of the most hardened infidel commonly fails him at that solemn period.

Reader! Are you one of the many who scarcely ever think of these things; and whose chief concern is, what you shall eat, what you shall drink, and werewithal you shall be clothed? Let the anxiety of a heathen reprove you. *If like other animals, you were made only to eat and drink, and figure away for a few years, and then to sink into nothing*, you might well throw aside every care, except that which respects your present gratification. But you are of an order of beings distinguished from all others in the creation. In your nature is united mortality and immortality; the dust of the ground, and the breath of the Almighty. Life to you is but the introduction to existence, a short voyage which will land you on the shores of eternity. You are surrounded by a number of objects, and feel an interest in each. You build houses, plant orchards, rear animals, and form to yourselves *a home;* but you are not at

home. Your feelings associate with these things, but they are not fit associates for you. You may have a portion in all that is doing in your family, and in your country, yea, in some sort, in all that is done under the sun; but this is not sufficient for you. The time draweth nigh, when there will be an end to all these things, and they will be as though they had not been; but you will still live. You will witness the wreck of nature itself, and survive it; and stand before the Son of Man at his appearing and kingdom. Can you think of these things, and be unconcerned?

Or, though you be an immortal and accountable creature, (as your conscience tells you you are, whenever you consult it, and sometimes when you would gladly shut your ears against it,) yet, *if you had not sinned against your Maker*, there would be no cause for alarm. A sinless creature has nothing to fear from a righteous God. The approach of an assize, with all its solemn pomp, does not terrify the innocent; neither would judgment or eternity inspire the least degree of dread, if you were guiltless. But you are a *sinner*, a corrupt branch of a corrupt stock. God placed, as I may say, a generous confidence in our species, and required nothing in return but love; but we have returned him evil for good. You, for yourself, are conscious that you have done so, and that it is in your very nature to do evil.

Or, though you be what is called a sinner, yet *if sin were your misfortune, rather than your fault*, you might fly for refuge to the equity of your Maker. But this is not the case. Whatever may be said as to the manner in which you became a sinner, and however you may wish to excuse yourself on that ground, your own conscience bears witness, that what you are, you choose to be, and occasionally reproaches you for being so. You may speculate upon sin as a kind of hereditary disease, which is merely a misfortune, not a fault; but if so, why do you feel guilt on account of it any more than of the other? Why do you not also acquit others of blame, where the evil is directed against you? You do not think of excusing a fellow-creature, when he injures you, upon any such grounds as you allege in excuse of transgression against God. If the party be *rational and voluntary*, you make no further inquiry; but, without any hesitation, pronounce

him criminal. Out of your own mouth therefore shall you be judged. The inability that you feel to do good, is entirely owing to your having *no heart* to it. It is of the same nature as that of an unprincipled servant, who cannot seek his master's interest, but is impelled by his selfishness to be always defrauding him. You would not hold such a servant blameless. Nor will God hold you so. You are not destitute of those powers which render us accountable beings, but merely of a heart to make use of them for God. You take pleasure in knowledge, but desire not the knowledge of *his* ways; in conversation, but the mention of serious religion strikes you dumb; in activity, but in his service you are as one that is dead. You are fond of news; but that which angels announced, and the Son of God came down to publish, gives you no pleasure. All these things prove, beyond a doubt, where the inability lies.

Or, if sin should be allowed to be your fault, yet, if it were a *small offence*, an imperfection, that might be overlooked, or so slight a matter that you could atone for it by repentance, prayers, or tears, or any effort of your own, there might be less reason for alarm. But neither is this the case. If sin were so light a matter as it is commonly made, how is it that a train of the most awful curses should be denounced against the sinner? Is it possible, that a just and good God would curse his creatures in basket and in store, in their houses and in their fields, in their lying down and rising up, and in all that they set their hands to, for a mere trifle, or an imperfection that might be overlooked? If sin were a light thing, how is it that the Father of mercies should have doomed all mankind to death, and to all the miseries that prepare its way, on account of it? How is it that wicked men die under such fearful apprehensions? Above all, how is it that it should require the eternal Son of God to become incarnate, and to be made a sacrifice, to atone for it? But if sin be thus offensive to God, then are you in a fearful situation. If you had the whole world to offer for your ransom, and could shed rivers of tears, and give even the fruit of your body for the sin of your soul, it would be of no account. Were that which you offered ever so pure it could have no influence whatever towards atoning for your past guilt, any more than the tears of a murderer can atone for

blood: but this is not the case—those very performances by which you hope to appease the divine anger, are more offensive to him than the entreaties of a detected adulteress would be to her husband, while her heart, as he well knows, is not with him, but with her paramours. You are, whether you know it or not, *a lost sinner*, and that in the strongest sense of the term. Men judge of sin only by its open acts, but God looketh directly at the heart. Their censures fall only on particular branches of immorality which strike immediately at the well-being of society; but God views the root of the mischief, and takes into consideration all its mischievous bearings. *Know thou therefore, and consider, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast done; that thou hast departed from the living God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of hosts.*

Finally. Though your sin be exceeding offensive to your Creator, and though you can make no atonement for it, yet if you could *resist his power, escape his hand, or endure his wrath*, your unconcernedness might admit of some kind of apology. Surely I need not prove to you, that you cannot resist his power—what is your strength, when tried. You may, in the hour of health and festivity, and when in company with others like yourself, look big and put out great words, but they are words only. If God do but touch you with his afflicting hand, your strength and your courage instantly forsake you. And will you go on to provoke Omnipotence? *If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, how wilt thou contend with horses? If in the land of peace thou hast been overcome, how wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan?*—Neither canst thou *escape* his hand; for whither wilt thou flee? If, attentive to thy safety, the rocks could fall on thee, or the mountains cover thee, yet should they not be able to hide thee from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. God hath beset thee behind and before, and laid his hand upon thee. Whither wilt thou go from his Spirit? Whither wilt thou flee from his presence? If thou ascend to heaven, he is there! Or if thou make thy bed in hell behold he is there!—The only question that remains, is, whether you can *endure his displeasure?* And this must surely be a forlorn hope! By the horrid imprecations which we so

commonly hear from hardened sinners, who call upon God to damn their bodies and souls, it would seem as if they laid their account with damnation, and wished to familiarize it; as if they had made a covenant with death, and with hell were at agreement: but when God shall lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, these refuges of lies will suddenly be swept away.

Reader! Can thine heart endure, and thine hands be strong, in the day that he shall deal with thee? Think of the *wrath to come.* If it were founded in caprice or injustice, supported by conscious innocence, you might possibly bear it; but, should you perish, you will be destitute of this. Conscience will eternally say, *Amen*, to the justice of your sufferings. If you had mere justice done you, unmixed with mercy, your sufferings would be more tolerable than they will be. If you perish, you must have your portion with Bethsaida and Chorazin. Goodness gives an edge to justice. The displeasure of a kind and merciful being, (and such is the wrath of the Lamb) is insupportable.

If, after having heard these things, and lived in a country where they are fully declared, you do not feel interested by them, you have reason to fear that God has given you up to hardness of heart, and that that language is fulfilled in you. *Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and not understand; and seeing, ye shall see and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.* Remember that in Old Testament times, when God blessed his people Israel with singular temporal blessings, he punished their transgressions mostly by temporal judgments; but now that we are favoured with singular spiritual privileges, the neglect of them is commonly punished with spiritual judgments.

But whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, I will declare unto you the only way of salvation. That which was addressed to the Philippian Jailer, is addressed to you. *God hath so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life.* He has given

him not only to teach us the good and the right way, but to be made a sacrifice for sin, and as such to be himself the way. He suffered from the hands of wicked men; but this was not all; it pleased the Lord to bruise him. He hath put him to grief, and made his soul an offering for sin. He commanded his sword to awake against him, that through his death he might turn his hand in mercy towards perishing sinners. He hath set him forth to be a propitiation to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. This is the only sacrifice which is well-pleasing to God. All that went before, were of no account but as they pointed to it; and all the prayers and praises of sinful creatures are no otherwise acceptable than as presented through it. It is not for you to go about to appease the divine displeasure, or to recommend yourself to the Saviour by any efforts of your own; but, despairing of help from every other quarter, to receive the atonement which Christ hath made. To this you are *invited* and that in the most pressing terms. He that made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, hath on this ground committed to his servants the ministry of reconciliation, and they, as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by them, pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

The blessings of pardon, peace, and eternal life, are compared to a feast, or marriage-supper, which the King of heaven and earth hath made for his Son; and he hath commanded his servants to go forth, as to the highways and hedges, and to invite without distinction; yea and to compel them to come in. Nor is this all: you are exhorted and commanded to believe in Christ, on pain of damnation. All your other sins expose you merely to the curse of the law; but the sin of unbelief, if persisted in, will expose you, like the barren fig-tree, to the curse of the Saviour from which there is no redemption.

Say not in thine heart, "All these things I have believed from my youth up." You may indeed have been taught them, and have received them as a tradition from your fathers: but such faith is dead, and consequently unoperative. It is the same as that of the Jews towards Moses, which our Saviour would not admit to be faith

If ye believed Moses, saith he, *ye would believe me, for he wrote of me.* It is no better than the faith of devils, and in some respects has less influence; for they believe and tremble, whereas you believe and are at ease.

But it may be you will say, I have examined Christianity for myself, and am fully persuaded it is true. Yet it has no effect upon you any more than if you disbelieved it, unless it be to restrain you within the limits of exterior decorum. Your faith, therefore, must still be *dead, being alone.* Believing in Christ is not the exercise of a mind at ease, casting up the evidences for and against, and then coldly assenting, as in a question of science, to that side which seems to have the greatest weight of proof. To one whose mind is subdued to the obedience of faith, there is indeed no want of evidence; but it is not so much from external proofs, as from its own intrinsic glory, and suitableness to his case as a perishing sinner, that he feels himself impelled to receive it. The Gospel is too interesting, and hath too much influence on our past and future conduct, to be an object of unfeeling speculation. It is *a hope set before us*, which none but those who are *ready to perish*, will ever embrace. To believe it, is to renounce our own wisdom, our own righteousness, and our own will, each of which is directly opposed to it; and to fall into the arms of mere grace, through the atoning blood of the cross. If the good news of salvation be not in this manner believed, it signifies but little what speculative notions we may entertain concerning it; for where there is no renunciation of self, there is no dependance upon Christ for justification: and where there is no such dependance, there is no revealed interest in that important blessing; but the curses and threatenings of God stand in all their force against us.

If, after all your examinations, you continue to make light of the gospel feast, and prefer your farms, merchandizes, or any thing else before it, you will be found to have no part in it. Yet, be it known unto you, that the feast shall not be unattended. Heaven shall not go without inhabitants, nor Christ without reward, whether you be saved or lost. The stone set at nought by man, is nevertheless the head of the corner. Consider then, take advice, and speak your mind.

THE GREAT QUESTION ANSWERED.

PART II.

Had the question, proposed by the Jailer, been addressed to the first genius upon earth, unacquainted with the Gospel, it could not have been answered. Had it been put to all the great philosophers of antiquity, one by one, and to all the learned doctors among the Jews, none of them could have resolved it to any good purpose. Nor amidst all the boasted light of modern times, can a single unbeliever be found, who could know what to do with it. Yet it is a question which arises in every man's mind, at one period or other of his life; and a question which must be resolved, or we are lost for ever.

Reader! This important question may have already occupied your mind. An alarming sermon, a death in your family, a hint from a faithful friend, or, it may be, an impressive dream, has awakened your attention. You cannot take pleasure, as formerly, in worldly company and pursuits; yet you have no pleasure in religion. You have left off many vices, and have complied with many religious duties, but can find no rest for your soul. The remembrance of the past is bitter; the prospect of the future may be more so. The thought of God troubles you. You have even wished that you had never been born, or that you could now shrink back into non-existence, or that you were any thing rather than a man. But you are aware that all these wishes are vain. You do exist; your nature is stamped with immortality; you must go forward and die, and stand before this holy Lord God!

If these, or such like exercises, occupy your mind, the question of the Philippian Jailer is yours; and to you let me address a few directions, included or implied in the answer.

If by this question you mean, What can you do to appease the wrath of God, or recommend yourself as a fit object of his mercy? What can you do as a good deed, or the beginning of a course of good deeds, in reward of which he may bestow upon you an interest in the Saviour? I answer, *Nothing*. An interest in Christ, and eternal life, are indeed given as a reward; but not of any thing we have done, or can do; no, not by divine assistance; it is

the reward of the obedience of *Christ* unto death. To us it is of mere grace, and as such must be received. Though faith is in itself a holy exercise of the mind, yet, as that by which we are justified, it is directly opposed to doing. "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." He that worketh, seeks to obtain life and the favour of God, in some way or other, as a reward; but he that believeth, receives it as a free gift to the unworthy. And let me apprize you, that this is the state of mind you must be brought to, or you must perish for ever. So far as you think of doing any thing, call it what you may, with a hope of being pardoned and justified for its sake, so far you reject the only way of salvation, and have reason to expect your portion with unbelievers.

Let me deal freely with you. Yours is a most serious situation. The Gospel-rest is before you; and if you enter not in, it will be because of unbelief. You know the answer given to the Jailer; and this is the only answer that can with safety be given to you. Consider, and beware, as you regard your eternal salvation, that you take up your rest in nothing short of it.

But, in the first place, let me declare unto you the Gospel of God, which you are directed to believe. If this meet your case; if, rightly understood, it approve itself not only to your conscience, but your whole soul; if it accord with your desires, as it undoubtedly does with your necessities, all is well, and well for ever. I shall not trouble you with the opinions of men as to what the Gospel is, nor even with my own, but direct you to the account given of it by its Author. The New Testament informs us what it is, in such plain and pointed language, that he who runs may read: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."—"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you *the Gospel* which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also *ye are saved*, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received,

how that *Christ died for our sins* according to the scrip tures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."—"This is a faithful saying, (a truth of such importance as to have become a kind of Christian proverb,) and worthy of all acceptation, that *Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*, of whom I am chief."—"We PREACH *Christ crucified.*"—"I determined NOT TO KNOW ANY THING among you, save *Jesus Christ and him crucified.*"—"THIS IS THE RECORD, *that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*"

It is not meant by these brief descriptions of the Gospel, that there is no other truth necessary to be believed; but that the doctrine of the cross, properly embraced, includes all others, or draws after it the belief of them.

The import of this Gospel, is, that God is in the right, and we are in the wrong; that we have transgressed against him without cause, and are justly exposed to everlasting punishment; that mercy, originating purely in himself, required, for the due honour of his government, to be exercised through the atonement of his beloved Son; that with this sacrifice God is well-pleased, and can, consistently with all his perfections, pardon and accept of any sinner, whatever he hath done, who believeth in him.

What say you to this? The truth of it hath been confirmed by the most unquestionable proofs. It first began to be spoken by the Lord himself, and it has been confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles. The witness of the three in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, is borne to this; namely, that "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son;" and to this also is directed the witness of the three on earth, the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood. Can you subscribe to this great truth, in all its bearings, and rest the salvation of your soul upon it; or do you doubt whether you be so guilty, so helpless, and in so dangerous a state as this doctrine supposes? Is it as one of the chief of sinners that you view yourself; or does it grate upon your feelings to receive forgiveness in that humble character? In suing for mercy, are you content to stand on the same low ground as if you were a convict actually going to be executed; or does

your heart secretly pine after a salvation less humiliating, in which some account might be made of that difference of character by which you may have been distinguished from the vilest of men, and in which you might be in some degree a co-operator with God? Does that which pleases God, please you; or does your mind revolt at it? It meets all your wants; but none of your prejudices, proud thoughts, or vicious propensities; all these must come down, and be made a sacrifice to it. Can you subscribe to it on these terms?

I am well aware, that the great concern of persons, in your situation, is to obtain *peace of mind;* and any thing which promises to afford this, attracts your attention. If this Gospel be believed with all your heart, it will give you peace. This is the good and the old way; walk in it, and you shall find rest for your soul: but it is not every thing which promises peace, that will ultimately afford it. It is at our peril to offer you other consolation; and at yours to receive it.

Consider, and beware, I say again, as you regard your eternal salvation, that you take up your rest in nothing short of Christ! Particularly,

1. *Beware of brooding over your guilt in a way of unbelieving despondence; and so of standing aloof from the hope of mercy.* Say not, "My sins have been too great, too numerous, or too aggravated, to be forgiven." "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from *all sin.*" Believest thou this? You are not straitened in him; but in your own bowels. God's thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor his ways as your ways: as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his thoughts higher than your thoughts, and his ways than your ways. On the sinner that returneth to our God he bestoweth *abundant* pardon. It is not, "If thou canst do any thing, help me;" but, "If thou canst believe—all things are possible to him that believeth." Of what dost thou doubt? Of his all-sufficiency? He is able to save to the *uttermost* all that come unto God by him. Of his willingness? Ought not his gracious invitations to satisfy thee on this head? Can you imagine that he would proclaim, saying, "Whosoever thirsteth, let him come unto me and drink," and yet be reluctant to gratify the desires of those that come to him? Objections, on the ground of the great

ness of guilt and unworthiness, may seem to wear the face of modesty and humility; but after all, it becomes you to consider whether they be any other than the workings of a self-righteous spirit. If you could find in your heart to accept of mercy as one of the chief of sinners, all your objections would vanish in a moment. One sees, in your very tears of despondency, a pining after acceptance with God, by something in yourself. Were they put into words, they would amount to something like this—"If I had but somewhat to recommend me to the Saivour, I could go to him with assurance; or if I had been less wicked, I might hope for acceptance." And what is this but making good the complaint of our Saviour? "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life!" Such longings after something to recommend you to the Saviour, are no other than "going about to establish your own righteousness;" and while this is the case, there is great danger of your being given up to imagine that you find the worthiness in yourself which your soul desireth.

2. *Beware of dwelling, in a way of self-complacency, on those reformations which may have been produced by the power of conviction.* This is another of those workings of unbelief, by which many have come short of believing, and so of entering into rest. There is no doubt but your convictions have driven you from the commission of grosser vices, and probably have frightened you into a compliance with various religious duties: but these are only the loppings off of the branches of sin; the root remains unmortified. It is not the breaking off of your sins that will turn to any account, unless they be broken off *by righteousness;* and this will not be the case but by believing in Christ The power of corruption may have only retired into its strong holds, from whence, if you embrace not the Gospel-way of salvation, it will soon come forth with increased energy, and sweep away all your fancied reformations. Nay, it is very possible, that while the *lusts of the flesh* have seemed to recede, those of the *mind*, particularly spiritual pride, may have already increased in strength. If, indeed, you dwell on your reformations, and draw comfort from them, it is an undoubted proof that it is so; and then, instead of being reformed, or nearer the kingdom of heaven than you were before, your character is more offensive

to God than ever. Publicans and harlots are more likely to enter into it than you. Besides, if your reformations were ever so virtuous, (which they are not, in his sight by whom actions are weighed,) yet, while you are an unbeliever, they cannot be accepted. You yourself must first be accepted in the Beloved, ere any thing that you offer can be received. "It does not consist with the honour of the majesty of the King of heaven and earth, to accept of any thing from a condemned malefactor, condemned by the justice of his holy law, till that condemnation be removed."

3. *Beware of deriving comfort from the distress of mind which you may have undergone, or from any feelings within you.* Some religious people will tell you, that these workings of mind are a sign that God has mercy in reserve for you; and that if you go on in the way you are in, waiting as at the pool, all will be well in the end: but such language requires great qualification. It is not your being distressed in mind, that will prove any thing in your favour, but the issue of it. Saul was distressed, as well as David; and Judas, as well as Peter. When the murderers of our Lord were pricked in their hearts, Peter did not comfort them by representing this their unhappiness as a hopeful sign of conversion; but exhorted them to *repent and be baptized every one of them, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.*

And thus it was with Paul and Silas, when the Jailer was impressed with fear and dismay: they gave him no encouragement from thence, but preached Jesus Christ as the only source of hope. If one who had slain a man in Israel, had stopped short of the city of refuge, and endeavoured to draw comfort from the alarm which he had felt, lest the avenger of blood should overtake him, would he have been safe? There is no security to you or to any man, but in fleeing immediately to the Gospel-refuge, and laying hold of the hope set before you. If you take comfort from your distress, you are in imminent danger of stopping short of Christ, and so of perishing for ever. Many, no doubt, have done so; and that which they have accounted waiting at the pool for the moving of the waters, has proved no other than settling upon a false foundation. Indeed it must needs be so; for as there is no medium, in one that has heard the Gospel, between faith and unbelief, he that does not believe

in Jesus for salvation, if he have any hope of it, must derive that hope from something in himself.

4. *Beware of considering faith itself the meritorious ground of acceptance with God.* It is true that believing is an act of yours, and an act of obedience to God. Far be it from me that I should convey an idea of any thing short of a cordial reception of the Gospel being accompanied with salvation: a reception that involves a renunciation of self-righteousness, and a submission to the righteousness of God. But if you consider it as a species of sincere obedience, which God has consented to accept, instead of a perfect one; and if you hope to be justified in *reward* of it, you are still "going about to establish your own righteousness" under an evangelical name. This is the commandment of God, that ye believe on the name of his Son. Faith is an act of obedience to God, yet it is not as such that it justifies us, but as receiving Christ, and bringing us into a living union with him, *for whose sake alone* we are accepted and saved

Finally. *Beware of taking comfort from any impulse, or unfounded persuasion that your sins are forgiven, and that you are a favourite of God.* Many are deceived in this way, and mistake such a persuasion for faith itself. When a sinner is driven from all his former holds, it is not unusual for him, instead of falling at the feet of Christ as utterly lost, to catch at any new conceit, however unscriptural and absurd, if it will but afford him relief. If in such a state of mind he receives an impression, perhaps in the words of scripture, that God has forgiven and accepted him, or dreams that he is in heaven, or reads a book, or hears a sermon, favourable to such a method of obtaining relief, he eagerly imbibes it, and becomes intoxicated with the delicious draught. The joy of hope, being so new and unexpected a thing, and succeeding to great darkness and distress, produces a wonderful change in his mind. Now he thinks he has discovered the light of life, and feels as one that has lost his burden. Now he has found out the true religion; and all that he read or heard before, not affording him relief, is false doctrine, or legal preaching Being treated also as one of the dear children of God by others of the same description, he is attached to his flatterers, and despises those, as graceless, who would rob him

of his comforts, by warning him against "the lie which is in his right hand."

I do not mean to say, that all consolation which comes suddenly to the mind, or by the impression of a passage of scripture, any more than by reading, or hearing, is delusive. It is not the *manner* in which we obtain relief, that is of any account, but *what it is that comforts* us. If it be the doctrine of the cross, or any revealed truth pertaining to it, this is Gospel consolation; but if it be a supposed revelation from heaven, of something which is not taught in the Scriptures, that is a species of comfort on which no dependence can be placed. A believer may be so far misled, as to be carried away with it; but, if a man have nothing better, he is still an unbeliever.

If ever you obtain that rest for your soul, which will bear the light, it must be not from any thing within you, but by looking out of yourself to Christ, as revealed in the Gospel. You may afterwards know that you have passed from death unto life, by the love you bear to the brethren, and by many other scriptural evidences; and from the time of your embracing the Gospel-remedy, you may be conscious of it, and so enjoy the hope of the promised salvation; but your first relief, if it be genuine, will be drawn directly from Christ, or from finding that in the doctrine of salvation through his death, which suits your wants and wishes as a perishing sinner.

DEATH BY ADAM, LIFE BY CHRIST

Our state by nature makes us tremble; but the grace of God, in Christ Jesus, gives us consolation. Oh! how precious and sweet must the gift of Jesus Christ unto eternal life be to us, when we rightly consider the sin of Adam, which hath reigned unto death! (Rom. v. 14.) Let us, with faith and repentance, embrace our Saviour, who came to deliver us from the consequences of the fall, and from sin and death, to destroy the works of the devil, and to bruise the Serpent's head.

Adam, by his fall, plunged us into misery; let us now fly to Jesus, who hath redeemed and saved us. Let us cast ourselves into His arms. He will sprinkle us with the blood of atonement for our sins, and bestow on us grace sufficient to change our hearts, and to establish them; a covenant firmer than that of nature; a happiness more lasting than that of the state of innocence. Superville.

N°. 10

THE GRACE OF GOD, AND A HOLY LIFE.

There is in many, a strange desire of separating what God hath joined together—the grace of God and the righteousness of man. One set of persons exalt the grace of God, and speak in the loftiest terms of the gospel of Jesus Christ; but say little of the duties of man and the obedience which is required of him: as if the bare knowledge of the gospel scheme were to be substituted in the place of true holiness; or as if it were wholly unnecessary to enter into the detail of that obedience which man ought to perform. Others equally unreasonable, insist exclusively upon the importance of moral practice, and view with jealousy every attempt to give prominence to the doctrines of grace; as if a blow were thereby aimed at morality, and as if the obligation to a righteous life were thereby undermined. Both are equally in error. The grace of God supplies a most efficacious motive to holiness; and holiness is the inseparable result of the grace of God, when it is received into the heart. The one is the means, the other the end. Can the end be answered without the means? Look at the success of those philosophising schemes of reformation which inculcated the beauty and the excellency of virtue, but applied no adequate motive to the mind. On the other hand, can the doctrines of Christianity be of any use, except as they conduce to their proper end? To allege this would be to degrade the gospel, since its superiority above every other moral system arises from its more powerful effects in meliorating the character and conduct of those who embrace it. In perfect harmony with this view of the subject we are told in scripture, that the Son of God gave himself

for us for the express purpose of *redeeming us from all iniquity, and purifying unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.*

In order, therefore, to acquire a just view of the Christian dispensation, we must regard a right system of faith, and a righteous and holy life as indissolubly connected. We must consider it as a vain attempt effectually to reform our conduct, unless we embrace the holy principles which Christianity inspires. And on the other hand, we must deem it unnatural, and even impious, to hold the truth in unrighteousness; to exalt the doctrines of the gospel, and to neglect the practical effects which these doctrines were intended to produce. Few indeed avowedly separate the doctrines of the grace of God from a righteous and holy life, but many do it practically. Many, who will fully admit the holy influence of the gospel, yet act as if the bare reception of its truths were a kind of compensation for, at least, what they would call the lesser sins of man. Hence, with a strange inconsistency, they will say, such a person is, without doubt, a religious man, but he is passionate. Another is exceedingly pious, but he is sullen and morose. A third is very devout but he is worldly. Is it not plain that a separation is here made between religion and its practical influence? It is supposed that a man can be religious, and yet not gentle: pious, and yet not benevolent: devout, and yet not detached from the world. In the same inconsistent manner do multitudes reason, who are religious on the Sunday, while they are wholly engrossed with the world through the week: who can attend with the same punctuality the church and the theatre: who would not on any account neglect the preaching of the gospel, but in their families discover nothing of its benign influence: who very carefully settle the articles of their faith, and hold them strenuously; but take little pains to regulate their temper, evidently over-looking that necessary duty, as if it were no essential branch of religion. In a word, we are chargeable with the same inconsistency whenever the holy doctrines which we believe are not embraced as principles of action, influencing and regulating our whole conduct, teaching us how to feel, to act, to suffer, in our families, in our shops, in our retirements, in our converse with the world; in short, in all the various circumstances of life.

The inconsistency which I have been condemning, is greatly supported by our resting in general ideas of religion without entering minutely into the details of its duties; and by our being satisfied with approving generally of its doctrines without a particular application of them to our own cases and circumstances. On the other hand, nothing shows more decidedly a truly upright spirit than the full and complete manner in which religion is applied, with distinctness and particularity, to a man's own case, carried through all the business of life, and made to regulate every part of the conduct. It is an easy thing to express an admiration of the scriptures, to speak in high terms of an excellent treatise on religion, or to be loud in commendation of a pious discourse. But the only solid proof which we can give in either case of *cordial* approbation, consists in the close and faithful application of what we have read or heard to our own consciences; in the alteration we are induced to make in those parts of our temper and conduct which have been shown to be wrong; and in the abiding nature of the effects which, through the blessing of God, have been produced in us. Herod knew that John was a just and holy man; he heard him gladly and did many things because of him. But when John plainly applied his preaching to Herod's own case, and said it is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife, then the insincerity of his heart appeared; he could not bear the application of the doctrine which he had previously professed to approve; and he put John to death.

The true remedy for this evil is the practice of close and diligent and daily self-examination; and the habit, not merely of reading the scriptures and hearing sermons, but of applying both, with fidelity, to our own circumstances. The words of a particular text are soon repeated: the propriety of the conduct it inculcates is easily acknowledged. But to examine its contents in detail, and to consider with attention, and with a view to ourselves, the temper and the practice which it enjoins, is a work of no small labour and self-denial. I trust, that none will think me presumptuous, if, with a view of lessening the difficulty, I should venture to propose a few questions which every individual may advantageously put to himself; and on his fair and honest re-

ply to which, as in the presence of God, ought to depend his judgment of his own state.

We acknowledge that man is a sinful and guilty creature, and that naturally his heart is "enmity against God." But are we conformably to this doctrine resisting that desire which we feel to be independent of God? and are we striving to bring every rebellious thought into subjection to the rules of his holy word? Do we feel that there is in ourselves an evil heart of unbelief which leads us to depart from God? and are we, therefore, afraid of loving other things better than God, of trusting to human support rather than to him, of honouring man more than God, and of valuing the world more than his favour? Is it our grief that we have hitherto served and obeyed God so imperfectly; and is it our serious wish and our sincere endeavour to honour him for the future, by setting him ever before our eyes, by making his will the rule of our actions, and his glory our end? What pains then are we taking to do this; and wherein do we show that we are in earnest about it? Unless we are daily and earnestly engaged in resisting and subduing that enmity against God, his law, government, and authority, which so much prevails in all by nature; what proof can we have of being right in our faith? Too many there are who, wholly selfish in their views and desires, seeking no farther to serve God than they think will be sufficient to prevent their incurring the dreadful effects of his displeasure. But are these true Christians? Certainly not. The object of the gospel is to teach us to strive against sin, to love God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, and to make his glory our aim in all that we do. This will readily be acknowledged. But let me ask, is it our unvarying endeavour to exercise that habitual regard to God which will influence us in all we say, do, or think? Does every thing bow in our esteem to the will and command of God? Do we adopt those principles and live that kind of life which we know God will approve; or is there nothing in either which we can alter for his sake? Do we labour to maintain in our minds a lively sense of his presence? Do we exercise a constant submission to his will, a constant dependence on his power, wisdom, and goodness? Are we habitually thanking him for the mercies we enjoy, ascribing them only

o his free and unmerited grace in Christ Jesus; and are we striving by some more substantial proofs than words to testify our gratitude to him? In our troubles, do we look to him alone for deliverance, resigning ourselves to his holy will, and even bearing affliction cheerfully for his sake? Do we value him as our chief good, as the only proper object of our happiness; and do we prove that we do so by preferring no gratification to his favour, by making every requisite sacrifice, and renouncing every evil habit, readily, for his sake? In short, do we set him before us as the witness of our actions, the judge of our conduct, the end of all that we do?

But let me now request my readers to take another view of the subject. They acknowledge, I doubt not, that this is a sinful world, and that therefore a Christian is not to be of the world even as Christ is not of the world, but is to make it his study to "mortify his members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for the which thing's sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." Now allow me to inquire, do we really believe this doctrine? Let us bring the matter to a point with our consciences. Are we renouncing the spirit of that world, whose friendship is represented as enmity against God? Are we crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts? Are we engaged in a secret warfare with all our evil inclinations, and labouring to bring them into subjection, that our hearts may be as a temple sacred only to Christ? If this is the case, how do we show it? Are we daily examining ourselves? With what perverse dispositions are we maintaining this struggle? Are we as much and as earnestly engaged in subduing ourselves, as in pursuing honour, wealth, or worldly comfort? In what do we deny ourselves? I ask not what open and public sacrifices we are making—vanity may prompt to these: nor whether we are imposing penances on ourselves—that is comparatively an easy task. But are we mortifying our vanity, curbing our pride, subduing our self-will, renouncing our love of consequence and power, giving up our own pleasure; and especially are we resisting our besetting sin? Many of the commandments of God, let it be remembered, it is both easy and creditable to fulfil. Herod himself seems to have executed these. But

he would not give up the gratification of a criminal passion from regard to those doctrines of which he acknowledged, generally, the truth.

The due reception of the gospel farther implies the attainment of a meek and quiet spirit. Do we then control our anger? Is the power of religion clearly visible in the restraint which we put upon those ebullitions of passion, and expressions of peevishness, which would otherwise break forth? Can we govern ourselves under provocation? If others are angry with us, are we calm with them? But perhaps some one may say, "My passion is soon over." Yes, this is natural to you: but why was it not restrained by religion? "But has religion," it may be asked, "any thing to do with our petty quarrels and resentments, which are soon excited and soon allayed?" Yes, for religion consists in restraining these from a regard to God, and reverence to his law. True religion is an habitual restraint on every evil temper: a powerful principle which keeps under and subdues every other which stands opposed to it. It is a principle derived from God, and it should be exercised in the resemblance of him who was meek and lowly in heart, and who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered, threatened not.

Then as to covetousness: are our desires of worldly things moderate? Are we contented with our present station, or are we *impatiently* striving to be delivered from its difficulties? Are we apt to be cast down when we meet with disappointment, and easily elated by worldly success? Are we making the wealth or the happiness of this world our principal objects: or are these wholly subordinate to religion? In a word, are we more anxious to possess the favour of God and his peace in our souls, than to possess any earthly treasures? Religion, it is true, does not require that we should relax in the just and proper duties of our calling, or be less diligent, industrious, and frugal than others; but then, if we are living as men whose conversation is in heaven, and whose hearts are chiefly set on things above, we shall pursue our business with far less eagerness than others do: we shall be far more anxious that our children should be holy than that they should be rich. Our children themselves should be able to perceive that it would make us more happy to see them religious than accomplished or rich

I would further ask, what it is from which we derive our pleasures? Knowing how impure and polluting many of the sources of earthly pleasure are, and how apt to draw away our hearts from God; are we so indifferent to them, as to renounce them entirely whenever the interests of our souls require it? Are our pleasures derived from other and purer sources, sources pointed out and sanctioned by the law of God, which in this, as in every other particular ought to be our guide and director? Do we consider eating and drinking as principal sources of gratification; or do we regard them in their true light, as necessary indeed to the support of our bodies, but at the same time as liable to become instruments of temptation, and hindrances to a holy and spiritual life, and therefore requiring to be regulated by the rules of strict temperance?

Thus also are we to guard against the inordinate love of an earthly object. We are to beware lest we should love even a wife, a husband, or a child, to such a degree, as to forget that God requires the chief place in our affections. In short, we must be habitually employed, would we really be Christians, in watching over and subduing every evil propensity; so that all the thoughts of our hearts may be brought into subjection to the will of God. To hear the gospel preached, to acknowledge its truth, to enjoy a measure of its comforts, is but a small thing. The essential business of religion consists much more in the secret warfare which I have described; in carrying our knowledge into practice, and regulating by it our daily conduct.

There is a class of duties which still remains to be noticed, I mean the duties of justice between man and man. The law of God with respect to these is, that we should do unto others as we would they should do unto us; nay more, that we should seek our neighbour's welfare as truly as our own, and some points even in preference to our own. Now how are we acting in this respect? We acknowledge the rule: are we following it? Can we withstand the temptation of profiting by the ignorance or carelessness of our neighbour? Shall we be able to say at the day of judgment, "it has been my rule in life to take no advantage of another?" There will be daily occasions of exercising the principle of true righteousness, if we are influenced by it It will lead us to judge favourably of our neighbour's ac

tions, and to defend him when unjustly accused; to rejoice in his prosperity, to sympathise in his distress, to supply his wants as far as we are able; and, above all, it will teach us to promote the welfare of his soul. There is nothing, perhaps, in which men are apt so much to pride themselves as in the discharge of their duty to their neighbour; and yet, when tried by the word of God, there is nothing in which they are generally more deficient.

If any one of my readers should object to this paper as legal, and as manifesting an ignorance of the grace of the gospel, I would entreat him to peruse the second chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to Titus. "Speak thou," says the venerable apostle, "the things which become *sound doctrine*." But what were the things becoming *sound doctrine* respecting which Titus was instructed to preach? They were the distinct and particular duties of aged men and aged women, of young women and young men, of servants and subjects. We see then how practical the preaching of Titus was required to be, and how particular also; not merely dwelling in generals, as too many are apt to do, and recommending holiness in a loose and vague way; but entering into the detail of the tempers which his hearers ought to possess, of the duties which they ought to practise, of the sins they ought to avoid: bringing religion home to their families and extending its influence to the ordinary business of life: regulating their whole conduct in such a manner as to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and to command the admiration even of heathens. And to confirm this view of the matter, the apostle states it to be the very design of the gospel to produce in all men such a conduct as he had recommended. *For the grace of God hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly* in the government of our appetites and passions; *righteously* in the due discharge of the duties we owe to our neighbour; *and godly* in the conscientious fulfilment of the duties we owe to God: and that we should be ever looking forward, as the object of all our expectations and hopes, to the second coming of Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour.

☞ Tracts may be obtained at the Society's Depository, Philadelphia, and of its Agents in various parts of the United States.

10.

No. 74.

THE PRACTICAL INFLUENCE

OF

FAITH.

The use and importance of faith, as it respects a sinner's justification before God, has been often largely insisted on; but it is likewise of great use and importance in the daily concerns of life. It gives evidence and subsistence to things not seen, and realizes the great truths of the gospel, so that they become abiding and living principles of support and direction while we are passing through this wilderness. Thus it is as the eye and the hand, without which we cannot take one step with certainty, or attempt any service with success. It is to be wished that this practical exercise of faith were duly attended to by all who profess to be followers of Christ. We should not then meet with so many cases that put us to a stand, and leave us at a great difficulty to reconcile what we see in some of whom we would willingly hope well, with what we read in scripture of the inseparable concomitants of a true and lively faith. For how can we but be staggered, when we hear persons speaking the language of assurance, that they know their acceptance with God, through Christ, and have not the least doubt of their interest in all the promises; while at the same time, we see them under the influence of unsanctified tempers, of a proud, passionate, positive, worldly, selfish, or churlish carriage?

It is not only plain, from the general tenour of scripture, that a covetous, a proud, or a censorious spirit, is no more consistent with the spirit of the gospel than drunkenness or whoredom; but there are many express texts directly pointed against the evils which too often are found amongst professors. Thus the apostle James assures us, "If any man seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, his religion is vain;" and the apostle John, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;" and he seems to apply this character to any man, whatever his profession or pre-

tences may be, "who, having this world's goods, and seeing his brother have need, shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him." Surely these texts more than intimate, that the faith which justifies the soul does likewise receive from Jesus grace for grace, whereby the heart is purified, and the conversation regulated as becomes the gospel of Christ.

There are too many who would have the ministry of the gospel restrained to the privileges of believers; and when the fruits of faith, and the tempers of the mind, which should be manifest in those who have "tasted that the Lord is gracious," are inculcated, think they sufficiently evade all that is said, by calling it *legal* preaching. I would be no advocate for legal preaching: but we must not be deterred by the fear of a hard word, from declaring the whole counsel of God; and we have the authority and example of St. Paul, who was a champion of the doctrines of free grace, to animate us in exhorting professors to "walk worthy of God, who has called them to his kingdom and glory." And indeed the expression *a believer's privilege* is often misunderstood. It is a believer's privilege to walk with God in the exercise of faith, and, by the power of his spirit, to mortify the whole body of sin; to gain a growing victory over the world and self, and to make daily advances in conformity to the mind that was in Christ. Nothing that we profess to know, believe, or hope for, deserves the name of a privilege, farther than we are influenced by it to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. Whoever is possessed of true faith, will not confine his inquiries to the single point of his acceptance with God, or be satisfied with the distant hope of heaven hereafter. He will be likewise solicitous how he may glorify God in the world, and enjoy such foretastes of heaven as are attainable while he is yet upon earth.

When our Lord was upon earth, and conversed with his disciples, their eyes and hearts were fixed upon him. In danger he was their Defender; their Guide when in perplexity; and to him they looked for the solution of all their doubts, and the supply of all their wants. He is now withdrawn from our eyes; but faith sets him still before us, for the same purposes, and according to its degree,

with the same effects, as if we actually saw him. His spiritual presence apprehended by faith, is a restraint from evil, an encouragement to every service, and affords a present refuge and help in every time of trouble. To this is owing the delight a believer takes in ordinances, because there he meets his Lord; and to this likewise it is owing that his religion is not confined to public occasions; but he is the same person in secret as he appears to be in the public assembly; for he worships him who sees in secret; and dares appeal to his all-seeing eye for the sincerity of his desires and intentions. By faith he is enabled to use prosperity with moderation; and knows and feels, that what the world calls good is of small value, unless it is accompanied with the presence and blessing of Him whom his soul loveth. And his faith upholds him under all trials, by assuring him that every dispensation is under the direction of his Lord; that chastisements are a token of his love; that the season, measure, and continuance of his sufferings are appointed by infinite wisdom, and designed to work for his everlasting good; and that grace and strength shall be afforded him, according to his day. Thus, his heart being fixed, trusting in the Lord, to whom he has committed all his concerns, and knowing that his best interests are safe, he is not greatly afraid of evil tidings, but enjoys a stable peace in the midst of a changing world.

By the same principle of faith a believer's conduct is regulated towards his fellow-creatures; and in the discharge of the several duties and relations of life, his great aim is to please God, and to let his light shine in the world. He believes and feels his own weakness and unworthiness, and lives upon the grace and pardoning love of his Lord. This gives him an habitual tenderness and gentleness of spirit. Humbled under a sense of much forgiveness to himself, he finds it easy to forgive others, if he has aught against any. A due sense of what he is in the sight of the Lord preserves him from giving way to anger, positiveness, and resentment: He is not easily provoked, but is "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;" and, if offended, easy to be entreated, and disposed, not only to yield to a reconcilia-

tion, but to seek it. As Jesus is his life, and righteousness, and strength, so he is his pattern. By faith he derives from him a benevolent spirit, and, according to his sphere and ability, he endeavours to promote the welfare of all around him. The law of love being thus written in his heart, and his soul set at liberty from the low and narrow dictates of a selfish spirit, his language will be truth, and his dealings equity. His promise may be depended on, without the interposition of oath, bond, or witness; and the feelings of his own heart, under the direction of an enlightened conscience, and the precepts of scripture, prompt him "to do unto others as he would desire they, in the like circumstances, should do unto him." If he is a master, he is gentle and compassionate; if a servant, he is faithful and obedient; for in either relation he acts by faith, under the eye of his Master in heaven. If he is a trader, he neither dares nor wishes to take advantage, either of the ignorance or the necessities of those with whom he deals. And the same principle of love influences his whole conversation A sense of his own infirmities makes him candid to those of others. He will not readily believe reports to their prejudice, without sufficient proof: and even then he will not repeat them, unless he is lawfully called to it. He believes that the precept, "Speak evil of no man," is founded upon the same authority with those which forbid committing adultery or murder; and therefore he "keeps his tongue as with a bridle."

Lastly, Faith is of daily use as a preservative from a compliance with the corrupt customs and maxims of the world. The believer, though *in* the world, is not *of* it: by faith he triumphs over its smiles and enticements, he sees that all that is in the world, suited to gratify the desires of the flesh or the eye, is to be avoided, not only as sinful, but as incompatible with his best pleasures. He will mix with the world so far as is necessary, in the discharge of the duties of that station of life in which the providence of God has placed him, but no farther.

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THE

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These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and *searched the Scriptures* daily, whether those things were so.—Acts xvii. 11.

Whatever pretends to exceed the direction of the Word may safely be rejected cannot safely be admitted.—*Dr. Owen.*

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Recommendation to the Second English Edition.

"Another edition of Mr. Pengilly's '*Scripture Guide to Baptism*' being about to appear, we take the opportunity of recommending it to the candid perusal of all persons who desire to be guided by the word of God alone in reference to this ordinance. It adduces and examines every passage of the New Testament that relates to the subject, and endeavours, in a very becoming spirit, to point out the will of Christ, as deducible from that unerring standard of Truth. A very considerable number of important extracts from the writings of our best Divines are also contained in it, expressive of their candid sentiments on the passages of Scripture which are here considered; as well as in relation to the inquiries at the end of the pamphlet, as to the commencement of the practice of infant baptism, and the arguments used in defence of that practice. In short, for the limits of this pamphlet, it is one of the best things we have ever seen for assisting the meditations of a serious inquirer."

W. Steadman, D. D. *Bradford.*
Cha. Whitefield, *Hamsterly.*
William Innes, *Edinburgh.*
William Hartley, *Stockton.*

Recommendation to the Third American Edition, Published in Boston, December, 1827.

It has given us great pleasure to learn, that the merits of Pengilly's "*Scripture Guide to Baptism*" have so far attracted the attention and favour of the publick, that a third Boston Edition is now called for. We wish that a copy of it were placed in the hands of every Christian, and of every inquirer after truth. Next to the Bible, it is the first book we would recommend to every person, who wishes to know what the Bible teaches respecting baptism. Here every passage of the New Testament which has any reference to the subject, is fairly cited; and is illustrated by the opinions of eminent Pædobaptist writers. The spirit which pervades the work is mild and candid, and gives it an additional claim to the attention of every Christian, whatever may be his opinions respecting baptism.

L. Bolles, *Salem.*
C. P. Grosvenor, *Pastor of First Bap. Ch. Boston.*
Jas. D. Knowles, *Pastor of Second Bap. Ch. Boston.*
Daniel Sharp, *Pastor of Third Bap. Ch. Boston.*
Howard Malcom, *Pastor of Federal St. Bap. Church*
Elon Galusha, *New-York.*

PREFATORY ADDRESS

THIS little work, Christian Reader, is designed for such persons, and such only, as readily admit the following important sentiments.

1. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain the only revealed will of God.

2. That whatever God enjoins on his people in his word, they are bound by irresistible obligations to perform.

3. That men are not at liberty to *alter*, in any one respect, the appointments of God.

4. That Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the *two only* ordinances, or positive institutions, of the New Testament; and that it is consequently the bounden duty of all who profess to be the disciples of Christ, solemnly to observe them, and to observe them in *that way* which the word and example of Christ authorize.

I shall now suppose, Reader, that one of these ordinances, viz. BAPTISM, is that subject which at this time employs your serious attention; that you are desirous of knowing the will of Christ respecting it, and for that purpose, of reading and examining the whole which the Scriptures contain in relation to it. You would not probably be able to turn readily to all those passages which pertain to the subject of your inquiry, as they are interspersed through almost the whole of the New Testament, *and to assist you in this respect* is the principal design of this pamphlet.

I shall, therefore, in the following pages transcribe *every passage* and *verse* of Scripture that relate to this ordinance, and lay them before you in their purity as I here find them; that without trouble or loss of time, you may read and examine for yourself the *whole* that it has pleased God to communicate for our instruction and direction on this subject.

In a few notes, printed in a smaller type, I have humbly endeavoured to point out what I conceive to be taught us in the passages here transcribed. In these notes I have written under the impression of my accountability to the righteous Judge, and am not conscious that I have, in any one place, given a sense different from what was intended by the Holy Spirit: and that this may be the more evident, I have subjoined a considerable number of Extracts from the writings of eminent Divines, who held a different view of this ordinance, but who have candidly acknowledged what practice has the authority of the word of God, and what has not. The Reader is exhorted, however, (while he *peruses* the notes, and these citations from different eminent authors, intended to illustrate the text,) not to allow his mind to be *influenced*, or his practice governed, by any *human* authority, but by the WORD OF GOD alone, which shall here be plainly and fully laid before him. The nature and plan of this little work will be further discovered by the next page.

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THE SCRIPTURE GUIDE

TO

BAPTISM.

SECTION I.

John's baptizing the Jews, before the beginning of our Lord's ministry.

The first place of Scripture where the ordinance of Baptism is found, describes the mission, preaching, and baptizing of John, the harbinger of Christ. As all the four evangelists have given us some account of John and his practice, I shall take the *fullest* information from them all, and present it to the reader in its proper connexion. The following collection and disposition of passages will afford us, I conceive, a complete account in the pure words of Scripture.

First, The divine Mission of John, and the Design of it.

Mark i. 1. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. John i. 6. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. Mark i. 2. As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Matt. iii. 3. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Luke i 16. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God; ver. 17. and he shall go before him—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Luke iii. 1, 2. Now—the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.

Secondly, John's preaching, as to the grand theme of it.

Matt. iii. 1, 2. In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Luke iii. 3. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Acts xiii. 24. John preached the baptism of repentance to all

the people of Israel, Acts xix. 4., saying unto the people, That they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

Thirdly, John's baptizing.—He informed his hearers, that God had sent him, not to preach only, but to baptize with water. John i. 33.

Mark i. 5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. Matt. iii. 7—11 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers! who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance: 9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire. 12 Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

There are two *inquiries* which I shall suppose you, my reader, are desirous to have answered by every place of Scripture laid before you.

I. What description of persons were admitted to Baptism in those days; and,

II. In what manner was this ordinance administered. Whether adults only, professing to be awakened to their spiritual concerns, or with them also their infant children;—and whether they received this ordinance by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. To ascertain the practice of John as to the

I. Inquiry—observe in the Scriptures above,

1. John was sent of God to "Prepare the way of the Lord," the Messiah, by "turning many of Israel to the Lord," and thereby "making a people ready" for the farther instruction and special service of Christ, who was immediately to follow him. This, all must acknowledge, can only relate to adults. The design was answered in the first disciples of Christ, who had been disciples of John.

2. The substance of John's preaching, was, that men should "re

pent" and "believe on him who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

3. The persons John baptized are described by the Holy Spirit, in very few words. They came from all parts of Judea, "and were ALL baptized of him, CONFESSING THEIR SINS." This is *all* we have given us of the persons John baptized, and this is said of *all of them.*

4. Others came to his baptism, but though Pharisees, and children of Abraham, they are rejected till they "bring forth the fruits of repentance."—As far therefore as the Scriptures are our guide, as to John's practice, he baptized none (Christ excepted,) but humble, penitent, and repenting sinners. To this effect we have the words of

ORIGEN, (a learned father, who lived within a century after St. John.) "We ought necessarily to observe, that both St. Matthew and St. Mark say, that upon *confessing their sins*, all Jerusalem, &c. were baptized. But St. Matthew brings in the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to be baptized, but not confessing their sins; and for this reason they are called a generation of vipers."

In Dr. Gale's Reflect. on Wall's Hist. of Inf. Bap. p. 385.

This opinion is also supported by the following modern and well known Pædobaptist divines.

DR. ERSKINE. "John's baptism was termed *the baptism of repentance*, and baptism *to repentance:* because he required of ALL whom he admitted to baptism, a profession of repentance, and exhorted them to such a conduct as would demonstrate their repentance genuine." *In Booth's Pædobap. Exam.* Vol. II. p. 241.

MR. SCOTT. "Adult Jews, professing repentance and a disposition to become Messiah's subjects, were the ONLY PERSONS, as far as we can find, whom John admitted to baptism."

Family Bib. Notes on the place.

II. Inquiry—as to the manner by which the ordinance was administered. Observe, 1, The meaning of the word *Baptize.* The plain import of this word, my reader is particularly requested to examine, and to remember, whenever we meet with it in the subsequent pages, it is the word used by the Holy Spirit to express this ordinance, and adopted by our translators, from the original Greek, but not translated. If it were translated into English, what is the meaning of it? This is a question of great importance to our present inquiry. We will therefore hear what answer the most learned Pædobaptist divines will give this question.

WITSIUS, (Professor of Divinity in the Universities of Francker Utrecht, and Leyden.) "It cannot be denied, but the native signification of the words βαπτειν and βαπτιζειν, is to plunge or dip."

Œcon. of the Cov. Vol. III. B. IV. § 13.

ZANCHIUS, (Professor of Divinity at Heidleburg.) "The proper signification of βαπτιζω is to immerse, plunge under, to overwhelm in water." Mr. de Courcy tells us, the opinion of Zanchius is worth a *thousand* others. *Pæd. Exam.* V. I. p. 48.

CALVIN. "The word baptize signifies to immerse, and the rite of immersion was observed by the ancient church." *Ibid.* p. 46.

Beza. "Christ commanded us to be baptized; by which word it is certain immersion is signified." *Ut Supra.*

Vitringa. "The act of baptizing is the immersion of believers in water. This expresses the force of the word." *Ib.* p. 47.

Dr. Campbell, (Principal of the Marischal College, Aberdeen.) "The word βαπτιζειν both in sacred authors and in classical, signifies to dip, to plunge, to immerse."

Four Gos. V. II. p. 259. *Note on* Mat. iii. 11.

Bossuet, (Bishop of Meaux.) "To baptize signifies to plunge, as is granted by all the world."

In Dr. Stennet's Remarks on Addington, p. 60.

2. In perfect consistency with the plain and proper sense of the word *baptize*, John takes the inhabitants of Jerusalem, &c. not to the brook Cedron, which ran hard by the city, but to the distant large river of Jordan.

Dr. Towerson. "For what need would there have been of the Baptist's resorting to great confluxes of water, or of Philip and the Eunuch's going down into this, were it not that the baptism of the one and the other was to be performed by an immersion? A very little water, as we know it doth with us, sufficing for an effusion or sprinkling."

Of the Sacra. of Bap. P. III. p. 56. *Pæd. Exam.* V. I. p. 209.

3. It is said also, that they were baptized, not *at*, but "*in* the river of Jordan."

Venema. "It is without controversy, that baptism, in the primitive church, was administered by immersion into water, and not by sprinkling, seeing John is said to have baptized IN *Jordan*, and where there was *much water*."

Hist. Eccles. Secul. i. § 138. *Pæd. Exam.* V. I. p. 212.

4. John baptized also εν ὑδατι as well as εν τῳ Ιορδανη, i. e. "in water,"—as well as "in the Jordan." Our translators have it *with* water; but as εν in the last place must signify *in*, not *with* the Jordan, so when expressing the same act, or circumstance, it must of necessity mean the same thing.

Mr. Hervey, when contending that εν signifies *in*, adds, I can prove it to have been in peaceable possession of this signification for more than *two thousand years*. Every one knows" he observes in another place, "that *with* is not the native, obvious, and literal meaning; rather a meaning swayed, influenced, moulded by the preceding or following word."

Letters to Mr. Wesley, Let. II. and X.

In four of the first versions of the Bible into English, we find these words rendered literally "in water;" but the expression not suiting the prevailing custom, it was afterwards rendered *with water*. It is *in*, in the Vulgate, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic, and several more modern versions.—Vide Pædo. Exam. V. I. p. 103.

Dr. Campbell. "In water—εν ὑδατι.—Nothing can be plainer than that, if there be any incongruity, in the expression *in water*, this, *in Jordan*, must be equally incongruous." *Note in loc.*

Lenfant. "*In the water—in the Holy Ghost.* These words do very well express the ceremony of Baptism, which was at first per

formed by plunging the whole body in water, as also the copious effusion of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost."

In Pæd. Exam. V. I. p. 191.

My reader will infer, from the *four* particulars above noticed in the language of the sacred historians, in what manner the great Harbinger of Christ administered this ordinance.

§ II. *The Baptism of JESUS CHRIST, from the four Evangelists.*

Our Lord's Baptism we next find, immediately following the above account of John. This place attaches to it infinite interest and weight, by the infinite dignity of the person baptized. The following is the fullest account given us.

Matt. iii. 13. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. Mark i. 9. AND—JESUS—WAS BAPTIZED OF JOHN IN JORDAN. Matt. iii. 16. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water. Mark i. 10. And—coming up out of the water, Luke iii. 21., and praying, the heaven was opened. 22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. 23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age.

John i. 32. And John bare record; saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

What, my pious reader, can we say of the subject of baptism in *this* case! What an honour is here attached to this ordinance! and consequently to all that piously follow the example of the Redeemer in it?

Let the man who slights and contemns this sacred institution, calling it 'a useless, unmeaning ceremony, incapable of washing away sin, or of effecting any good, and consequently utterly unne-

cessary,' let him read these verses, and view the immaculate Son of God, who had "no sin" to wash away, hastening from Galilee down to Jordan "to be baptized." Let him see the "Wisdom of God" entering the streams, and bowing beneath them,

"The emblem of his future grave."

This, we should suppose, would teach him to think and to speak differently of the ordinance, and silence every objectio.. to the practice of it. And if a sight of CHRIST in Jordan had no effect, let him *hear* and *see* the approbation of the FATHER and SPIRIT testified on this very occasion, and *immediately* upon his submission to this ordinance.

Four things you will here notice in the text. 1. The *Language* of Christ in answer to John, thus explained by an esteemed Commentator:

MR. SCOTT. *Thus it becometh us.* "We never find that Jesus spake of himself in the plural number, and must therefore allow he meant John also, and ALL *God's servants* in a subordinate sense. It became Christ, as our surety, and as our example, perfectly *to fulfil all righteousness;* it becometh us ALL to walk in God's commandments and ordinances without exception."

Fam. Bib. Notes on the place.

2. The *Time* chosen for fulfilling the promise of pouring forth the Spirit upon Christ. This is noticed and improved by the pious

DR. DODDRIDGE. "Jesus had no sin to wash away, and yet he was baptized; and God owned this ordinance so far as to make it the season of pouring forth the spirit upon him. And where can we expect this sacred effusion, but in a conscientious and humble attendance upon divine appointments?" *Fam. Exp.* Imp. of the place.

3. The *Reason* why Christ would be baptized; upon which hear the celebrated and excellent

WITSIUS. "Our Lord would be baptized, that he might conciliate authority to the baptism of John—that by his own example he might commend and sanctify our baptism—that men might not be loth to come to *the baptism of the* LORD, seeing the Lord was not backward to come to the baptism of a *servant*—that by his baptism, he might represent the future condition both of himself and his followers first *humble*, then *glorious;* now mean and low, then glorious and exalted; *that* represented by IMMERSION, *this* by EMERSION—and, finally, to declare by his voluntary submission to baptism, that he would not delay the delivering up of himself to be immersed in the torrents of hell, yet with a certain faith and hope of emerging."

Miscel. Sac. T. II. Exer. XV. § 63.—*Pæd. Ex.* V. I. p. 147.

4. The *Circumstance* immediately following his baptism, namely, his COMING UP OUT OF THE WATER, which implies that he went down into it; a circumstance required in no mode of baptism but immersion, and hence we infer he was *buried*, or *immersed* in water.

DR. MACKNIGHT. Jesus "submitted to be baptized, that is, buried under the water by John, and to be raised out of it again, as an emblem of his future death and resurrection."

Transla. of Epis. Note on Rom. vi.

Vossius. "That John the Baptist and the Apostles immersed persons whom they baptized, there is no doubt. For thus we read, *and they were baptized IN Jordan—And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway OUT OF the water, &c.*"

In Pæd. Exam. V. I. p. 204.

Bp. Taylor. "The custom of the ancient churches was not sprinkling, but immersion; in pursuance of the sense of the word in the commandment, and the example of our blessed Saviour."

Ut Supra, p. 199.

My reader cannot be at a loss to know whether our Lord was an example of sprinkling infants—or the immersion of believers; nor will he, I hope, need to be reminded how infinitely interesting and binding any duty becomes by his example. How reasonable is the observation of Dr. Ridgeley, "The example of Christ and his Apostles ought to be a rule to the churches in all succeeding ages." To which every christian will add, with Mr. Polhill, "The pattern of Christ and the Apostles is more to me than all the human wisdom in the world"

§ III. *Christ baptizing, by his disciples, in Judea.*

This is the only mention of our Lord's baptizing, or of the disciples, during his personal presence with them, and consequently it claims our very serious attention.

John iii. 22. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea: and there he tarried with them, and baptized. 26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him. 27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

Chap. iv. 1. When, therefore, the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, 2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) 3 He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

The import of this passage is simply this: 'Jesus went into the land of Judea and baptized—many hearing of him, and remembering what John had preached concerning him, flocked to him—and soon it was generally known and said, "That Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John;" upon which the Saviour departed, and went into Galilee.'

The only thing to be noticed here, and it is certainly of some im-

portance as to our *first inquiry*, is this, that Christ MADE disciples *before* he baptized them. He did not begin with baptizing, but with instructing. He *first* taught them his gospel, and they, believing and embracing his word, became his disciples; upon which, *secondly*, he baptized them. As this is all the evangelists have recorded respecting Christ's baptizing, through the whole of his ministry, this is consequently ALL in which the *practice* of Christ is given for the guide of his people. What we are to understand by "disciples," or "making disciples," is thus described by

DR. OWEN. "By disciples of Christ, I intend them, and them only, who profess faith in his person and doctrine, and to hear him, or to be judged by him, alone, in all things, &c.—This is the method of the gospel, that first men, by the preaching of it, be MADE DISCIPLES, or be brought unto faith in Christ, and then to be taught to do and observe whatever he commands." *In Pœd. Ex.* V. II. p. 287 & 275.

Our Lord, however, may be heard for himself, as to what is intended by *his disciples*, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." *Luke* xiv. 27. Whatever, therefore, may be said, in favour of infant baptism, it cannot be said, that either the *example* or *practice* of Christ affords it any support.

§ IV. *John's last baptizing in Ænon.*

The next passage we find on our subject, is contained in very few words. It is, however, a passage of considerable weight as to our *second inquiry*.

John iii. 23. And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came, and were baptized.

Independent of the sense of the word *baptize*, the reason assigned for John's choice of Ænon, would evidently indicate in what manner he administered this ordinance. Rivers, or places of "much water," are never *now* resorted to by our friends for the purpose of sprinkling; and if they should be, it would never be assigned as a reason, "because there was *much water* there." As *much water* in that case would be utterly unnecessary, it would be *no reason*, and hence is never sought. But let the *baptizing* in this verse be translated, and all is plain and clear. 'John was *immersing* the penitent Jews in Ænon, because there was *much water* there.'

CALVIN. From these words, John iii. 23, it may be inferred, that baptism was administered by John and Christ by plunging the whole body under water." *In loc. Pœd. Exam.* V. I. p. 194.

My reader, however, will be aware, that ὕδατα πολλὰ in this verse signifies literally *many waters;* and that some have contended in favour of sprinkling, that it refers to *many small rivulets*, or *shallow streams*, in that place. This interpretation destroys itself; for *one*

shallow stream would supply water enough, to sprinkle all the people of Ænon, and Salim, too; and a *great number* of shallow streams not being required, John would never choose Ænon on the *very account* of what was totally unnecessary. If scripture be the best interpreter of scripture, which is universally allowed, my reader would do well to observe, that the same expression "many waters" is used for the Euphrates, Jer. li. 13. Septuag., but the Euphrates is expressly styled "The great river Euphrates," Gen. xv. 18. Deut. i. 7, &c., and hence the inference would be natural, that he that before chose the *great river* of Jordan to baptize in, would now choose Ænon, not on account of its *shallow streams*, but of its affording the like facility with the Jordan. Whether the *voice* which is compared to "great thunder," and "the voice of many waters," Rev. xiv. 2., can resemble most the fall of *many small rivulets*, or of a *vast river*, cannot be difficult to determine. Let us listen a moment to two of the most learned commentators on this verse, and, requesting the reader to remember it during our future inquiries, we will proceed.

Dr. Doddridge. "John was also at the same time baptizing at Ænon;—and he particularly chose that place because there was a great *quantity* of water there, which made it very convenient for his purpose. Nothing, surely, can be more evident than that πολλα ὑδατα, *many waters*, signifies a large quantity of water, it being sometimes used for the Euphrates. Jer. li. 13. Septuag., *The voice of many waters* does plainly signify the roaring of a high sea."

Fam. Expo. Para. and Note in loc.

Dr. Whitby. Οτι ὑδατα πολλα ην εκει; *Because there was much water there*, in which their whole bodies might be dipped; for in this manner *only* was the Jewish baptism performed, by a descent into the water, Acts viii. 38., and an ascent out of it, ver. 39., and a burial in it. Rom. vi. 3, 4. Colos. ii. 12." *Annot. in loc.*

General account of John's success.

The above being the last mention of John's baptizing, it seems proper to close it with the short account given in Luke, of the general reception this *greatest of Prophets* and his baptism met with from different characters. Some heard him, believed him, and were baptized by him; and adored the goodness and mercy of God in sending him. But others, though of greater religious repute, rejected him and his baptism, and thereby rejected the gracious counsel of God, against their own spiritual interest. Our Lord, on this occasion, had spoken in the highest terms of his zealous Harbinger, whose labours were now at an end, and it is immediately added,

Luke vii. 29. And all the people that heard *him* and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. 30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. 35 But wisdom is justified of all her children.

BURKITT. "Others *rejected the counsel of God*—i. e. the revealed will of God, refusing to be baptized of him. This rejecting the counsel of God we are guilty of, when we are ashamed, in times of persecution, to own and profess him—when we submit not ourselves to the reasonable laws and commands of Christ." *In loc.*

§ V. *Christ represents his sufferings under the Figure of a Baptism, in Mark* x. 35 to 40, *and*

Matt. xx. 22. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. 23 And he said unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

Luke xii. 50. But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

As *baptism* is here taken metaphorically, nothing decisive, in reference to the ordinance itself, can be grounded upon it. Our Lord is describing the greatness of his sufferings—he calls it a *baptism*. The only question, in reference to our present inquiries, is this, Does sprinkling a little water on the face, or being totally immersed in it, best set forth the severity of Christ's sufferings? The following extracts will probably contain my reader's opinion.

DR. DODDRIDGE thus paraphrases the places: "Are you able to drink of the bitter cup of which I am now about to drink so deep, and to be baptized with the baptism, and *plunged* into that sea of sufferings with which I am shortly to be baptized, and, as it were, *overwhelmed* for a time?" *Paraphrase on Matt.* xx. 22.

"I have indeed a most dreadful baptism to be baptized with; and know that I shall be shortly bathed, as it were, in blood, and *plunged* in the most *overwhelming* distress." *Paraphrase on Luke* xii. 50.

WITSIUS. "Immersion into the water is to be considered by us as exhibiting that dreadful abyss of Divine Justice, in which Christ for our sins, was for a time, as it were, absorbed; as in David, his type, he complains, Psalm lxix, 2., *I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.*" *Œcon. of the Cov.* L. IV. C. xvi. § 26.

MR. HERVEY, the pious author of Theron and Aspasio, expresses himself, on this subject, with great energy. "He longed, (beneficent, blessed BEING!) he longed for the fatal hour. He severely rebuked one of his disciples who would have dissuaded him from going as a volunteer to the cross. He was even *straitened*, under a

kind of holy uneasiness, till the dreadful work was accomplished; till he was *baptized with the baptism of his sufferings*, bathed in blood, and *plunged* in death." *Theron and Aspasio*, Vol. II. p. 150.

§ VI. *The* COMMISSION *which our Lord gave his Apostles about the time of his ascension into Heaven, containing the* INSTITUTION *of Christian Baptism.*

Baptism, it is evident, was instituted long before the following Commission was delivered to the apostles. It was instituted by God, and enjoined on John, the forerunner of Christ, as a part of the work to which he was especially called. Hence, when speaking of the Father, he describes him by this very circumstance, "He that sent me to baptize with water." John i. 33. Our Saviour also had directed his disciples to baptize such persons as should receive his word, when he commenced his public ministry; see § III. p. 12; but he delayed the *full* and *formal* institution of christian baptism till he was risen from the dead, when he united it with his last most solemn charge, given by Matthew and Mark, in the following verses,

Matt. xxviii. 16. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. 18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world.

Mark xvi. 15. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. 19 So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

How solemn and interesting was this occasion! The Redeemer had undergone the baptism of his sufferings, last described—he had been bathed in blood in the garden!—he had sunk into death on the cross, under floods of wrath due to mankind! But now he is arisen triumphant, and is about to ascend to his glory.

He had appointed his disciples to meet him on a mountain of Galilee, where he was to give them the important charge contained in the verses above. The solemn hour is come: we may be assured the disciples are eager to catch every word from their ascending

Lord, and that he would give them his directions in the plainest language possible.

He begins by encouraging their sorrowful minds with a view of his supreme power in heaven and earth—*in heaven*, to give them the Holy Spirit; to employ the angels in their behalf; and finally, to bestow the kingdom of heaven upon them. So he had all power *in earth*, to gather his church out of all nations; to subdue or restrain his enemies; and to reign over and dwell with his people as Lord and King in Zion.

Hence the Saviour gives them the commission for preaching and baptizing, which you, my Reader, cannot too attentively consider. If you conceive there is any obscurity in the one Evangelist, the other will explain him, and this explanation you will, no doubt, esteem preferable to ten thousand criticisms. By uniting the words of both, they may be thus disposed, "Go ye, therefore, into all the world; teach all nations, and preach the gospel to every creature; him that believeth, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and he shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Our great Legislator, who only has right to enact laws for his church, to whom we must submit, and who will have nothing taken away from, or added to his word, Rev. xxii. 18, 19., has here described to his apostles *the person* to whom they are to administer this his ordinance, namely, the BELIEVER; the person who shall cordially believe the gospel which they shall preach: and if he has given no direction to admit any other to this ordinance, who will dare to speak where He is silent? or even allow himself *to think* that the Lord has not expressed his own will sufficiently clear, or sufficiently extensive? Let us hear

MR. ARCHIBALD HALL, a Pædobaptist, speaking of this subject: "How grand and awful is that weighty preface to the institution of christian baptism! Mat. xxviii. 18, 19. Who is that daring, insolent worm, that will presume to dispute the authority, or change the ordinances of HIM who is given to be Head over all things to the church? The solemnity of this ordinance is complete; and all the purposes of its institution are secured by the authority and blessing of Christ. His laws are not subject to any of those imperfections which are attendants of the best contrived systems among men, and frequently need explanations, amendments and corrections. It is most dangerous and presumptuous to add any ceremony, or to join any service, on any pretence, unto Heaven's appointment."

Gospel Worship, V. I. p. 325. *Pæd. Ex.* V. I. p. 29.

It has been replied, that "our Lord required *all nations* to be baptized; 'Go teach all nations, baptizing them,' &c. and hence, as infant children make a part of all nations, he has here *commanded* their baptism." In reply, let me ask, whom could our Saviour intend, when in the first words he said "Go teach all nations?" My reader will certainly answer, "Doubtless such in all nations as are *capable* of being *taught*—not infant children, for certain, or any naturally incapable of understanding what they hear." If this be true, which none will deny, our Lord *must* intend the same persons, when

he immediately added these two words, "baptizing *them;*" and as *teaching* is set BEFORE *baptizing*, the passage plainly directs that persons should *first* be instructed in the truths and doctrines of the gospel, and in case of their receiving the glad tidings, they should *secondly* be baptized.—This perfectly accords with the language of the other evangelist, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved."

It has also been objected that μαθητευσατε, *teach*, is literally *disciple*, 'Go, disciple me all nations,' which is done by 'baptizing them.' That the word signifies to *make disciples*, is not denied, but that this is done *by baptism*, is contrary to fact. Simon Magus was baptized by Philip; yet he remained "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Acts viii. 13, 23. And are there not, in our days, any *baptized infidels;* who, so far from being *disciples* of Christ, are his open, avowed *enemies?* Let the words be rendered, "Go, disciple me all nations;" but let the Divine Speaker himself explain what he means by his disciple, and the question is settled. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." John viii. 31. "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Luke xiv. 27.

POOLE'S CONTINUATORS: "*Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.* The Greek is, *make disciples* all nations, but that must be first by preaching, and instructing them—and Mark expounds it, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;* that is, to every reasonable creature capable of hearing and receiving it."

Annot. in loc.

MR. BAXTER has a very forcible passage on the same place. "*Go, disciple me all nations, baptizing them.* As for those that say they are discipled by baptizing, and not before baptizing, they speak not the sense of the text; nor that which is true or rational—else why should one be baptized more than another? This is not like some occasional historical mention of baptism; but it is the very commission of Christ to his apostles, for preaching and baptizing; and purposely expresseth their several works in their several places and order. Their *first* task is, by teaching, to make disciples, which are by Mark called believers. The *second* work is, to baptize them, whereto is annexed the promise of their salvation. The *third* work is, to teach them all other things which are afterwards to be learned in the school of Christ. [Observe what follows.] To contemn this order, is to renounce all rules of order; for where can we expect to find it, if not here? I profess, my conscience is fully satisfied from this text, that it is one kind of faith, *even saving*, that MUST GO BEFORE BAPTISM; and the profession whereof, the minister must expect."

Disputat. of Right to Sac. p. 91, 149, 150. *Pæd. Ex.* V. II. p. 270.

It would be endless to cite authors in confirmation of the plain interpretation given above of the Scriptures before us. We can only add the following:

ST. JEROME, (the most learned of all the Latin Fathers.) "They *first* teach all nations; then *when* they are taught, they baptize them

with water; for it cannot be that the body should receive the sacrament of baptism, unless the soul has BEFORE received the true faith."

In Dr. Gale on Wall, p. 319.

CALVIN. "Because Christ requires teaching before baptizing, and will have *believers* ONLY admitted to baptism, baptism does not seem to be rightly administered, except faith precede."

In Harm. Evan. Comment. ad loc. Pæd. Ex. V. II. p. 272.

SAURIN. "In the primitive church instruction preceded baptism; agreeably to the order of Jesus Christ, *Go, teach all nations, baptizing them, &c.*" *Serm.* Tom. I. p. 301.

We have now read and examined, as our limits would admit, all the passages of the *four gospels*, that relate to our inquiries. We have found the *example*, the *practice*, and the *command* of Christ, on this subject; but the baptism of none but believers has yet met with countenance from His authority. We have next to examine the *Acts of the Apostles*, for the obedience of the disciples to the command of their Lord, and if we have in any way mistaken his will, their obedience to it will most certainly correct our errors; and if we have understood his word, their practice, on the contrary, will confirm our opinion.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

"The Penman of this Scripture," the Assembly of Divines in their argument to it, assure us, "was Luke the Evangelist, (as appears from the first words of it) for the most part an eye witness to the things he records, being constantly a fellow-labourer with Paul. His purpose," they add, "in writing this narrative was, as he intimates in his first preface, that the church might have the *certain knowledge* of Christ, his gospel, and kingdom; that our faith might not be built on the uncertain reports of pretenders to truth." Hence, admitting the writer to be a faithful and pious historian, and writing purposely for the direction of the people of God ever after, and, above all, under the influence of the Spirit of God, we may safely rely, not only on the accuracy of the accounts, but on the fulness and sufficiency of the information to answer his professed purpose.

We have here recorded NINE INSTANCES of the administration of baptism. If, therefore, as above stated, we have misunderstood the Saviour's commission, the Apostles certainly did not; and hence by their obedience to it, we shall find an infallible interpretation of his will. The *first* instance is,

§ VII. *The Baptism at the Feast of Pentecost.*

On this memorable occasion, which was but ten days from the ascension, when the apostles and disciples were together at Jerusalem, it pleased God to accomplish the promise of pouring forth upon them the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost. By this divine and

miraculous power they all were enabled to speak in different languages to the multitude, then assembled at Jerusalem from different nations; so that every one heard in his *own tongue*, *the wonderful works of God*. Some having spoken dishonourably of the disciples, Peter stands forth in the midst to defend them; after which he delivers to the multitude a long and impressive discourse, in which he charged the Jews with having crucified the Lord of glory; but that God had raised him from the dead, and exalted him to his right hand, as the only Lord and Christ. Upon this follow the verses relating to the ordinance, and descriptive of the subjects of it.

Acts ii. 37. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

41 Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers; 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Here we must observe how the Apostle Peter obeys his Lord's direction in the commission. He begins by *preaching*, and never mentions a word of baptism till he found some of his hearers answering the character "he that believeth." Hence they are thus described:—1. They were pricked in their heart, and cried, *What shall we do?* 2. They are exhorted to a deeper repentance. 3. They GLADLY RECEIVED THE WORD, and thereon were baptized, and added to the church. 4. They afterward *continued steadfast* in the gospel they heard, and in the practice of the duties of it—praising God, and beloved of the people. Whether any part of this description will apply to infants, we must leave the reader to judge. Nothing can be plainer than the description given by the pen of inspiration.

The 39th verse, in the above passage, "The promise is to you, and to your children," is commonly urged in favour of infant baptism; as if the apostle alluded to some promise, on the ground of which infant children were deemed proper subjects of christian baptism. To answer which, let the *three* following things be considered:

1. The promise to which the apostle alludes, has no relation to *infant* children, it being the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost, of which infants are incapable. The people, observe, were asto-

nished at the effects and gifts of the Holy Ghost, which they saw and heard. The apostle assures them, ver. 16—18., it was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel, which prophecy is thus expressed, chap. ii. 28., "*I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.*" The apostle, after having proceeded in his discourse, observing his hearers still amazed at the gifts of the Spirit, in order to turn their amazement into joy, refers them, a second time, to this promise, ver. 38, 39., "Repent, &c. and you [yourselves] shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, FOR [by this I assure you of it] the promise is to you and to your children." Now, as the gift of the Spirit, is *the promise*, and as *infant* children are incapable of receiving it, *infant* children, in that age, cannot be intended. What the apostle meant by children in the promise, the promise itself will infallibly explain. *Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy—your young men shall see visions;* which cannot in any sense be applicable to infants.

Dr. Whitby. "These words will not prove a right of infants to receive baptism, the promise here being that only of the Holy Ghost, mentioned verses 16, 17, 18, and so relating only to the times of the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost, and to those persons who by age were capable of these extraordinary gifts." *Annot.* in loc.

Dr. Doddridge. "*The promise is to you and to your children.* Considering that the gift of the Spirit had been mentioned just before, it seems most natural to interpret this as a reference to that passage in Joel, which had been so largely recited above, ver. 17, &c., where God promises the effusion of the Spirit *on their sons and their daughters.*" *Fam. Expos. Note* on the place.

2. The word in the original, τεκνα, rendered *children*, signifies posterity.

Dr. Hammond. "If any have made use of that very unconcludent argument, Acts ii. 39., in support of infant baptism, I have nothing to say in defence of them. The word children there, is really the posterity of the Jews, and not peculiarly their infant children."

Works, V. I. p. 490.

Limborch, (a learned divine of Amsterdam.) "By τεκνα, the apostle understands, not infants, but posterity; in which signification the word occurs in many places of the New Testament: see among others, John viii. 39. *If ye were Abraham's* CHILDREN, *ye would do the works of Abraham.* Whence it appears, that the argument which is very commonly taken from this passage, for the baptism of infants, is of NO FORCE, and GOOD FOR NOTHING."

Comment. in loc. *Pœd. Exam.* V. II. p. 352.

3. The words of the Apostle immediately following explain his own meaning in the most decisive terms: "The promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even TO AS MANY AS THE LORD OUR GOD SHALL CALL,"—to *as many* of you and your children, and the Gentiles afar off, as God should call by his word and Spirit, to this great privilege through his Son.

Matthew Henry. "To this general, the following limitation must refer, *even as many of them*, as many particular persons in each

nation, *as the Lord our God shall call* effectually into the fellowship of Jesus Christ." *Expos.* of the place.

From the whole, it appears most evident, that none were encouraged to hope for christian baptism, but such as were *called* effectually by grace, and none were baptized but such as *gladly received the word.* So far, and no farther, the word of God is our guide.

§ VIII. *Philip baptizing at Samaria.*

This Philip, it seems, was a deacon of the church at Jerusalem, chosen to that office with Stephen, ch. vi. 5. These two deacons, at length, were raised to a more important work. Stephen had not entered the ministry long, before he was called upon to suffer martyrdom, in the cause of his Lord. Philip's labours and success are thus described:—

Acts viii. 5. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. 6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 8 And there was great joy in that city.

12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

In this instance, as well as the former, the commission is literally fulfilled. Philip began his work by *preaching Christ to them*, which when they heard and saw the miracles, they were filled with joy. Not a word about baptizing till some of the people *believed* the things concerning Jesus Christ; then *they were baptized, both men and women.*

Is it not highly probable, that some of these *baptized men and women* had children? And is it not still more probable, that if Christ designed, and the apostles practised, the baptism of the children of believers, Philip would have required these believing Samaritans to have brought their children to the ordinance? And if baptism was administered to *men, women and children*, how unaccountably strange is it, that the Sacred Historian, writing for the direction of after churches, and under Divine influence, should record *two* descriptions, and leave out the *third?* It is *impossible* that such a defect should be in such a book; and hence we infer, that the *only* subjects of baptism were, as described, BELIEVERS, *both men and women.* For, as

Mr. T. Boston justly observes, "The Sacraments are not *converting* but *confirming* ordinances. They are appointed for the use

and benefit of God's children, not of others; they are given to *believers*, as believers; so that none other are capable of the same before the Lord."—*Works*, p. 384. Nothing need be added farther on this place.

§ IX. *The Baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch.*

The eunuch, described in this chapter, was a person of high importance in the kingdom of Ethiopia, but a proselyte to the Jewish religion. He is now returning from Jerusalem, whither he had gone to worship at one of the public festivals, when Philip is directed to meet him in his way, and to teach him what, with so much success, he had taught the Samaritans. He found the eunuch sitting in his chariot, reading the prophet Isaiah, chap. liii. 7, 8. *He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, &c.* Philip having asked him if he understood the Prophet, the eunuch acknowledged his inability without assistance, and wished Philip to explain to him, whether the Prophet, in that place, spake of himself or of some other; and took him up into his chariot for that purpose: upon which we read,

Acts viii. 35. Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered, and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

These verses require no comment to render them plainer; nor will the reader need to be put in mind of the *commission* of Christ, after perusing them. We have here an example of the practice of the apostles before they admitted a person to baptism. Philip might have judged the eunuch a proper subject for baptism, after having heard the gospel, by being directed from Heaven to teach him—he might have judged it also, from his sincere request of it; yet he does not, he dares not, baptize him, unless he profess to *believe* the gospel WITH ALL HIS HEART, remembering, no doubt, that Christ had appointed the ordinance only for such.

Those who contend that servants and children were all baptized in those days with, and on account of, their masters and parents,

(see Matthew Henry on Acts ii. 41.) would find it difficult to support their hypothesis in this case. It is the greatest absurdity to suppose that Philip would admit all the eunuch's servants to baptism, without any profession, or even instruction, when he objected to the pious master, after he requested it, unless he was able to give a frank and open profession of faith in Christ. But he baptized none but the eunuch; and therefore we may safely conclude, the apostles had "no such custom, neither the churches of God." This relates to our *first inquiry.*

We have here also, relating to our *second inquiry*, some particular circumstances, calculated to determine most decisively the *manner* in which baptism was at this time administered. That this should be described in every instance, is not to be expected: if we have it but once, and admit that the apostles were agreed as to their practice, we must grant, that as they had but "one Lord, and one faith," so they had but "one baptism." Eph. iv. 5. We cannot for a moment imagine, that one baptized by sprinkling, another by pouring, and another by immersion, and in different churches and places, by different methods; for how would this diversity and opposition be received by people taught to be so strict, punctual, and uniform, in the ordinances of the Old Testament—and when all the apostles professed to have the *same* command, were commissioned by the *same* Lord, to preach the *same* truth and doctrine in every place?

Observe 1. Philip and the eunuch came TO the water, ver. 36., while in the chariot together. In this situation a small quantity might easily have been given them, and the ordinance administered, without the inconvenience of descending from the chariot, if *a small quantity* of water would suffice.

Dr. Doddridge. "It would be very unnatural to suppose, that they went down to the water, merely that Philip might take up a little water in his hand to pour on the eunuch. A person of his dignity had no doubt many vessels in his baggage, [by which water might be brought into the chariot] on such a journey, through a desert country; a precaution absolutely necessary for travellers in those parts, and never omitted by them.—See Dr. Shaw's Travels, pref. p. 4. *Fam. Expos. Note* in loc.

2. Philip and the eunuch not only came *to* the water, but descended from the chariot, and WENT DOWN BOTH INTO the water; and came UP OUT OF it; which, as it is a circumstance never known or observed by christians, in this ordinance, but where it is administered by immersion, and as for any other mode, as pouring or sprinkling, it is so grossly absurd, we cannot but own, with numberless authors on the place, of all denominations, that immersion must have been here practised.

Quenstedius, (a learned Lutheran Divine.) "Immersion is, as it were, a burial; emersion, a resurrection. It is written, Acts viii. 38, 39, that Philip *went down* with the eunuch INTO *the water*, and there baptized him; and it is added, that, the ordinance being administered, they both came UP OUT OF *the water*. Both the Eastern and Western churches were very observant of the rite of immersion for a great number of years."

In Pæd. Exam. V. I. p. 220. *See* Dr. Towerson. *at* p. 8.

Calvin, on this place, observes, "Here we perceive how baptism was administered among the ancients, for they immersed the whole body in water." *Comment.* on Acts viii. 38.

I suppose, my reader, I may venture to add, that in the case above, not the baptism of *infants by sprinkling*, but the baptism of *believers by immersion*, has a plain, sacred precedent. The eunuch promptly trod in the footsteps of that Saviour, in whom he now believed, and consequently "went on his way rejoicing."

§ X. *The Baptism of St. Paul.*

Saul, the zealous persecutor, while breathing out threatenings against the disciples of Christ, is met in his career of persecution, by the Lord himself, at whose exceeding glory, and powerful word, he falls prostrate and blind on the ground. Ananias, a devout disciple, is directed of God to go to him, and teach him what he is to do, and for his encouragement in visiting the persecutor, Ananias is informed that Saul was *praying*, and that God had made him *a chosen vessel* to himself.

Acts ix. 17. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Chap. xxii. 14. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. 15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. 16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Chap. ix. 18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

The promptitude of Ananias in baptizing Paul as soon as he had received the message from God, and the restoration of his sight, shows how strictly this ordinance was observed in the days of the apostles; and, consequently, how it should be observed to the end of time. A remark to this effect is made by

Stanhope, (an eminent English Divine.) "Observe here, that baptism, administered to a convert under such circumstances, is a sufficient intimation how guilty a neglect those deluded people allow

themselves in, who treat this and other like ordinances with scorn and contempt." *In Lindsay's Crit. Notes* on the place.

Paul is exhorted to *arise, and be baptized, and wash away his sins, &c.* He was to arise, and yield obedience to the command of Christ in baptism, and at the same time that his body received the washing of water, to pray that he spiritually might be freed from sin, by the purifying Spirit and cleansing blood of Christ. This, the action of immersion, or plunging under water, would strikingly represent.

Dr. Hammond. "The water here is set to signify the purifying Spirit of Christ, which hath that double power in it of cleansing from sin and from guilt. And the ancient manner of *putting the person baptized under water*, and then taking him out again, was set to denote the two several acts of this grace, first by way of dying, then of rising again." *Pract. Catechism*, p. 369.

Cowper. "There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners *plunged* beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

That Paul was a proper subject for baptism, agreeably to the commission, as having been taught, and believing the gospel, is by none disputed; but that he was baptized by immersion, some have questioned, urging, that it was not likely that a suitable place, or a sufficient quantity of water could be obtained. But that Damascus (where the apostle now was) had suitable places for dipping, is undeniably evident; for when Naaman, of this place, was required to wash his leprous body, by dipping himself in the Jordan, 2 Kings v. 10—14, he replied: "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean?" On these rivers, hear the learned

Assembly of Divines. "Much is written of the clearness, sweetness, and usefulness of these two rivers. The one is said to run through many parts of Damascus, whereby it comes to pass that most of the houses in that city are furnished with store of good water. The other is said to flow along by it, whereby their gardens, orchards, vineyards, meadows, &c. are made very fertile."

Annot. on 2 Kings v. 12.

Hence it was impossible that any place could be more favourable to baptism by immersion than Damascus. Happily, however, we can cite the apostle to decide this question for himself. Speaking of his baptism, and that of the primitive christians, he plainly describes the mode of it—"*So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death: therefore we are BURIED with him by baptism into death.*" Rom. vi. 3, 4.

§ XI. *The Baptism of Cornelius and his Friends.*

The next instance records the first Gentiles that were baptized, and received into the number of the disciples. Cornelius was *a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house.* He is directed

from Heaven to send for Peter the apostle, who should unfold to him the mysteries of the gospel of Christ. Cornelius, against the apostle's coming, *had called together his kinsmen and near friends*, to hear the will of God, and requested Peter, when arrived, to declare all that God had commanded him. The apostle begins his discourse by testifying, that he then evidently saw God respected not the persons of men, but every where, of every nation, he was accepted *with God, who feareth him, and worketh righteousness:* and after having taught them the leading doctrines of the gospel, he concludes by repeating what Christ had commissioned his apostles to do as their *first* and chief work, and the testimony of the prophets concerning him, in the two first verses below; after which we have the ordinance in question.

Acts x. 42. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the judge of quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

The order of the commission is here also observed. Peter began by *preaching;* and never a word of baptism is found till the people had heard the gospel,—had received the Holy Ghost,—had miraculously spoken in different tongues—and magnified God. Then, and not till then, Peter pleads for their baptism; and what should be particularly observed, he pleads for it upon the ground of their being most evidently made the children of God, by faith in Christ, and through the power of the Spirit. His language in ver. 47 implies, that if they did not appear to be regenerate persons, any one might object to their baptism; but as they had given evidences that could not be disputed, he infers, no one could deny the propriety of their being baptized. Hence they were, as clear as words can describe them, only adult persons. Accordingly,

Dr. Holland had infallible authority for his observation. "In the first plantation of Christianity among the Gentiles, such only as were of full age, after they were instructed in the principles of the christian religion, were admitted to baptism."

In Dr. Wall's Hist. Inf. Bap. V. II. Ch. II. § 14.

As to the manner by which these persons were baptized, as nothing is said of it by the sacred historian, no one has any ground for observations upon it. We are only to infer, they were baptized in the usual way, according to the example and command of Christ. It has been insinuated, however, that Peter most probably, ver. 47, required a little water to be brought to him in a cup or bason for the purpose of sprinkling; but the apostle neither speaks of *little* or *much* water, nor about bringing it, but simply of *water;* and, no doubt, he intended as much as the ordinance generally requires And, indeed, if the insinuation were a fact, it is highly improbable, that Peter, receiving a cup of water, would command others to baptize, as he himself might administer in the same time that he was giving the directions.

§ XII. *The Baptism of Lydia and her Household.*

The three following instances, as they relate to households, are commonly urged in favour of infant baptism; and indeed, as being the principal support of that practice in the New Testament. The reader will, therefore, the more particularly examine the Scriptures in reference to the persons that constituted these households, and if he find recorded the baptism of one infant, or any word in the text which evidently indicates it, he will consider the point as settled for ever in favour of infant baptism; but if the text does not contain such an indication of infants, but describes the baptized households, as consisting of persons arrived to the years of understanding, and so capable of hearing and believing the gospel,—then it must be granted, adult or believers' baptism receives all the support these instances afford. The *first* is of Lydia and her household.

Paul, whose baptism we have just considered, is now become the most zealous Apostle. He, with Silas, (and with them, probably Luke, the writer of this history) are sent to Macedonia, and to Philippi, a chief city of it, to preach the gospel. Being arrived, they began their work in the following way, and with the following success:—

Acts xvi. 13. And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither.* 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us:* whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there.* And she constrained us.

40 And they [that is, Paul and Silas, who afterward had been imprisoned at Philippi,] went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of* Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

Lydia, herself, it is evident, had a right to be baptized, according to the order of Jesus Christ, *He that believeth, &c.* But of what does it appear, from the text, did her household consist? of children, or grown persons? Before we answer this question, we observe there are *four* things which a Pædobaptist must take for granted, before he can urge this place in his favour; but if he can *prove* none of them, his argument (to use the learned Limborch's phrase,) "is good for nothing." 1. That Lydia had, at this time, or lately, an husband. 2. That she had children, and children then in infancy, or under the years of understanding. 3. That these children were with her at Philippi. 4. That such children were really baptized.

Now the whole of this we consider highly improbable; for respecting the first, it does not appear likely Lydia had any husband, as she herself is engaged in active business, and business that required her to travel to very distant places, and especially as we find no mention of him, though the disciples were frequently at her house. To the second, it may be said, that thousands are married and have no children—that thousands of families with children, have none under the years of understanding, and that if Lydia had, she would be, most probably, incapable of her present employment. To the third, that if Lydia had young children, she is not likely to have taken them with her on so long and troublesome a journey; for it would seem that Lydia was come from Thyatira, her home, for the purpose of selling purple, and for her convenience had taken a house or apartments at Philippi, which was about three hundred miles distant from Thyatira. And to the fourth, that if we admit the *three* former, it cannot be proved from the word *household*, that every one belonging to her was baptized; for the word is sometimes used in scripture for the principal part of a family: Thus in 1 Sam. i. 12. 'Elkanah and *all his house* went up to Shilo, to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and his vow:' yet we read, that, 'Hannah his wife, with her young son Samuel, abode at home at Ramah.'

The argument, therefore, for infant baptism, grounded upon the baptism of Lydia's household, is extremely weak, as it is highly improbable *she ever had either* HUSBAND *or* CHILDREN: and, certainly, before any such custom can hence be supported, as an ordinance of the New Testament, it ought to be UNDENIABLY PROVED, that she had infant children, and that they were actually baptized.

But, more satisfactory to the pious reader, than ten thousand surmises, the question of the persons of Lydia's household may be answered, with the greatest probability, from the last verse above cited. Paul and Silas, being delivered from prison, went into the house of Lydia, and here, undoubtedly, they found her 'household,' that they had baptized: having entered, we read, they saw THE BRETHREN, and COMFORTED THEM.—Lydia's household

therefore, being called 'brethren,' and capable of being 'comforted' by the word, must have been adults, and not infant children.

Dr. Whitby seems to consider it unquestionable. "And when she, and those of her household, were instructed in the christian faith, in the nature of baptism required by it, she was baptized and her household." *Paraphrase* on the place.

Limborch. "An undoubted argument, therefore, cannot be drawn from this instance, by which it may be demonstrated, that infants were baptized by the apostles. It might be that all in her house were of a mature age; who, as in the exercise of a right understanding, they believed, so they were able to make a public profession of that faith, when they received baptism."

Comment. in loc. *Pæd. Ex.* V. II. p. 359.

Assembly of Divines. "*Of the city of Thyatira*—A city of Asia—here dwelt Lydia, that devout servant of God"—"*And entered into the house of Lydia:* doubtless to confirm them in the faith which they had preached to them—Lydia and HERS hearing of their miraculous deliverance, could not but be *comforted* and confirmed in the truth." *Annot.* on Acts xvi. 14, 40.

The place at which Lydia was taught and baptized must have been remarkably convenient for immersion. The people were by the side of a river, and at a place prepared and frequented for public worship, and religious purification, by washing in the water. This agrees with the *Paraphrase* and *Note* on the place, by

Dr. Doddridge. "On the sabbath day we went out of the city to the river Strymon, where, according to the custom of the Jews, there was an oratory, or a place of public prayer.—It is certain that the Jews had a custom of building their oratories, or proseuchas, or places of public prayer, by the seaside, or near rivers, for the sake of purification; which was practised also by the Heathens before solemn devotions." Hence we add, that at a place so favourable no doubt the example of Christ was duly observed.

§ XIII. *The Baptism of the Philippian Jailer and Household.*

Paul and Silas having been cast into prison at Philippi, are delivered from their confinement at midnight, by the miraculous interposition of God. An earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, so that the doors of it were opened, and the prisoners' bands loosed. The jailer suspecting the escape of the prisoners, drew his sword to destroy himself, but which Paul prevented, by assuring him the prisoners were all there. Upon this we read his conversion and baptism.

Acts xvi. 29. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas. 30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord

Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. 32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. 34 And when he had brought them unto his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Here observe 1. The jailer bringing Paul and Silas out of the prison, being persuaded that they were the servants of the true God, and were now delivered by his power from their unjust and cruel punishment; and deeply convinced, at the same time, of his own sin and danger, urges them to tell him *what he should do to be saved?* To this greatest of questions he received a direct answer, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* It is probable, many if not all the jailer's family or household, alarmed at this awful event, ran to his assistance, as his life they would consider imminently in danger, both by the prisoners in order to escape, and especially by the law, if any had fled. Hence Paul indirectly spake to the whole, *Believe, and thou shalt be saved*, yea, *and thy house too*, in the same way.

Dr. Doddridge. "*Thou shalt be saved and thine house.* The meaning cannot be, that the eternal salvation of his family could be secured by *his faith;* but that—if they also themselves believed, they should be entitled to the same spiritual and everlasting blessings with himself; which Paul might the rather add, as it is probable that many of them, under this terrible alarm, might have attended the master of the family into the dungeon."

Fam. Expos. Note on the place.

2. We may next learn, from the text, in the most satisfactory manner, of what the jailer's household consisted; that they were not infants, or persons so young as to be incapable of being taught the gospel, and of believing it; for thus we read, ver. 32, "*They spake unto him the word of the Lord,* AND TO ALL THAT WERE IN HIS HOUSE." These two or three words from the pen of inspiration, decide the controversy. This household is *instructed*, ALL; therefore infants could not be included.

3. St. Luke farther describes the jailer and his household, and shows thereby, how the Lord's commission was still strictly obeyed. Paul and Silas first *preached the gospel* to the whole house, as observed above; and now we read, ver. 34, the jailer *rejoiced*, BELIEVING IN GOD, WITH ALL HIS HOUSE. Then it follows he had no infant children.

Matthew Henry. "The voice of rejoicing, with that of salvation, was heard in the jailer's house—*He rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house:* there was NONE in his house that refused to be baptized, and so made a jar in the ceremony, but *they were unanimous* in embracing the gospel, which added much to the joy."

Expos. in loc.

Calvin is still more expressive. "Luke commends the pious zeal

of the jailer, because he dedicated his whole house to the Lord, in which also the grace of God illustriously appeared, because it suddenly brought the WHOLE FAMILY to a pious consent."

Comment. in loc.

There is nothing in the text relative to the *mode* of their baptism except the words that relate the fact, *he was baptized and all his:* that is, they were *immersed* in the name of the Lord; for this, "it cannot be denied, is the native sense of the word." That the jailer had no convenient place for immersion, must first be proved before it be granted. It is certain, the river Strymon, ver. 13, to which the people were accustomed to go for purification, was near; and it is highly probable, there were many places much nearer, if not in the jailer's own premises, (which was the opinion of the learned GROTIUS) that would, most commodiously, admit of the ordinance in this form. It must be considered, how common a practice cold bathing was in this climate. That frequent bathing was usual among the Grecians and Romans, and is still in Turkey, in which country this city Philippi stood, is testified by

LORD BACON. "It is strange that the use of bathing, as a part of diet, is left. With the Romans and Grecians it was as usual as eating or sleeping; and so it is amongst the Turks at this day." *Nat. Hist.* Cent. VIII. *Exper.* 740. *In Dr. Stennett on Add.* p. 34.

Till it be proved that it was not the case, we are bound to believe they followed the pattern of their Lord, and were (to use the language of the person who in all probability baptized them) BURIED with Christ by baptism.

§ XIV. *St. Paul baptizing at Corinth.*

The next instance is the baptism of several persons at Corinth, where we now find the same apostle exerting himself to the utmost for the spread of Messiah's kingdom. Here, though many *opposed themselves and blasphemed*, yet he zealously persevered, and his labours were crowned with success; for thus we read:

Acts xviii. 4. And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *was* Christ. 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house: and many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptized.

A church being formed in this place, Paul afterward writes them two epistles. In the first of these he laments the unhappy divisions that prevailed among them, in contending for different ministers, as

if they had so many Saviours, and had been baptized in their separate names. Upon which he reasons:—

1 Cor. i. 13. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius: 15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. 16 And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

Chap. xvi. 15. Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and *that* they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.

Paul, at Corinth, as at all other places, begins his work, by testifying to the people "the things concerning Jesus Christ," and by teaching, not by baptizing, he makes disciples to Christ. He continued his labours at Corinth a year and six months, in which time many, hearing his preaching, *believed, and were baptized.* He himself baptized but few, namely, Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas, and in this he afterward rejoiced, as none of them, in their angry contentions, and excessive partiality, could say, "they were for Paul; for Paul baptized them, and that in his own name;" For, he adds, the first and chief work for which Christ sent him, was, *not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.* This assertion of the apostle will expose the error of those who talk about MAKING DISCIPLES BY BAPTIZING THEM; for if baptism made the subjects of it the disciples of Christ, Paul could not have said he was not sent to baptize; for to *make disciples* to Christ, was the great *charge* and *command* of the Lord to all his apostles, see p. 14, and was, at all times, the supreme object of Paul's zeal, labours, and sufferings.

The household of Crispus, as well as himself, were, no doubt, all baptized, as they were all proper subjects of the ordinance, agreeably to the words of the Institution; for *he believed on the Lord*, WITH ALL HIS HOUSE. Hence the household of Crispus, like that of the jailer, cannot be urged in favour of any but those that practise BELIEVERS' BAPTISM.

The household of Stephanas (which is the last household said to be baptized) is not described where their baptism is recorded; and had nothing, in any other place, been said of them, this would have been the only house left in uncertainty; but, as if it were the design of the Holy Spirit to leave no room for dispute, as to the proper persons to receive the ordinances of Christ, we find this family also described at the end of this epistle, as cited above: they were the *first-fruits* of the word of God in Achaia, and *they addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.* They exerted themselves in acts of charity, and christian affection, to their fellow, but poorer or more

afflicted disciples; and hence, (we scarcely need add) could not be infant children.

Dr. Doddridge. "*They have set themselves.* This seems to imply, that it was the generous care of the whole family to assist their fellow-christians; so that there was not a member of it which did not do its part." *Version* of, and *Note* on the place.

Dr. Hammond, though a Pædobaptist himself, thinks the inference of Pædobaptists *unreasonable*, that because Paul mentions the baptism of Stephanas's household, he must have baptized infants; for without the last verse, which assures us they were not infants, it could not be fairly inferred from the 16th verse. These are his words: "I think it unreasonable that the apostle's bare mention of baptizing his household, should be thought competent to conclude that infants were baptized by him."

Works, Vol. I. p. 494. *Pæd. Exam.* Vol. II. p. 358.

Unreasonable and unfounded, however, as this argument is, it is what is most commonly urged, and urged *even as an authority*, for administering this ordinance to infants. We have now read the description of all the households that are recorded as baptized by the apostles; and, though households almost without number, are mentioned in Scripture, and nothing added by which we know of what they consisted, of infants, or grown persons; yet it has pleased God, that the *households baptized* should all be described, so that after-ages might not be left to uncertain conjectures respecting them. Lydia's household are *brethren*, *a id comforted*—The jailer's are *all taught*, *and all believed*—Crispus's *all believed*—and Stephanas's *were the fruits* of the gospel, and *set themselves* to do good to the saints. Hence, if the word of God is to be our only guide in the things of God, the baptism of infants, on the ground of the passages we have yet met with, is justly styled, as we have seen, "unreasonable," and "good for nothing."

§ XV. *Certain disciples at Ephesus baptized.*

This is the ninth and last place, in the Acts of the Apostles, relative to our present inquiries. The question whether the persons, in this instance, were baptized *twice*, first with John's baptism, and now Christ's, does not materially concern us. All we have to consider is the description given of them; for which the text alone must be consulted.

Acts xix 1 Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? and they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John

verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, That they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

That these persons were *proper subjects* of baptism, by previous conversion, is clear; For, 1. They are called disciples.—2. They believed.—3. They received the Holy Ghost.—4. They spake with tongues and prophesied.—5. They were altogether twelve men.—No room, therefore, is here left for dispute. None will contend that any of these were infants—that they were infant BELIEVERS—infant PROPHETS, or infant MEN.

We have now passed through all the Acts of the Apostles, and examined all the instances of the administration of this ordinance recorded in this sacred history, and to this place we can confidently assert, that we have no where found *a single place or passage, that describes, records, or implies the baptism of any infants.* The reader will not suppose this a hasty conclusion, when he hears the following Pædobaptists:

DR. GOODWIN. "Baptism supposeth regeneration sure in itself first. Sacraments are never administered to *begin*, or *work grace.* Read ALL the Acts, still it is said, they *believed, and were baptized.* *Works*, Vol. I. P. 1. p. 200.

MR. T. BOSTON. "There is no example of baptism recorded in the Scriptures, where any were baptized but such as appeared to have a saving interest in Christ." *Works*, p. 384.

LIMBORCH. "There is no instance can be produced, from which it may indisputably be inferred that any child was baptized by the apostles." *Complete Sys. Div.* B. V. Ch. xxii. § II.

MR. BAXTER. (The appeal he makes to Mr. Blake, in this place, might be made, with all due respect, to every Pædobaptist.) "I conclude, that all examples of baptism in Scripture do mention only the administration of it to the professors of saving faith; and the precepts give us no other direction. And I provoke Mr. Blake, as far as is seemly for me to do, to name ONE PRECEPT OR EXAMPLE for baptizing any other, and make it good if he can."

Disput. of Rights to Sacram. p. 156. *Pæd. Exam.* V. II. p. 29.

THE EPISTLES.

§ XVI. *Passages which contain an express Allusion to the Mode of Baptism.*

Rom. vi. 3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection.

Colos. ii. 12. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

The object of the apostle Paul in these places, and their connexion, is to show the churches to which he is here writing, the necessity of a holy walk and conversation. To this end he puts them in mind of their baptism, the profession they made in it, and the obligation they took upon themselves to live according to those truths which the ordinance did plainly signify. '*Know ye not*, says he, *that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus*, into a profession of his religion, *were baptized into his death*,' into a reliance upon, and conformity to his death; the great design of which was to take away sin, and, consequently, as our Lord died, and was *buried* on account of it, so should we be *buried* to the love and practice of it. Then follows this plain and striking allusion to baptism in ver. 4, which, with the last verse above, reads to this effect—

"THEREFORE (to express this very design) ARE we BURIED BY and IN BAPTISM, with Christ our Lord; and as He was RAISED UP from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we are at our baptism, WHEREIN we likewise are RAISED UP to walk in newness of life, THROUGH the FAITH of the operation of God, which alone can produce the spiritual and saving effect which the outward form was to signify.

In this place the apostle does plainly describe baptism as a BURIAL, and thus designed as an image of the burial and resurrection of Christ.

Thus the sense of the word "baptize," and the necessity and design of "going down INTO, and coming up OUT OF the water"—of "baptizing IN THE JORDAN," and where "there was MUCH WATER;" which phrases we have already found in connexion with baptism, are all evidently explained. Pædobaptist divines, of the greatest celebrity for learning and information, have frankly allowed what we have above asserted. We have no difficulty but in making such a selection as will be most highly esteemed by the reader. The following are the greatest and the most unexceptionable that could be produced.

DR. WALL (Vicar of Shoreham, in Kent, and author of that famous work, 'the History of Infant Baptism,' for which he received the thanks of the whole clergy in convocation.) "As to the manner of baptism then generally used, the texts produced by every one that speaks of these matters, John iii. 23, Mark i. 5, Acts viii. 38, are undeniable proofs that the baptized person went ordinarily into the water, and sometimes the Baptist too. We should not know from

these accounts whether the whole body of the baptized was put under water, head and all, were it not for two later proofs, which seem to me to PUT IT OUT OF QUESTION. *One*, That St. Paul does twice, in an allusive way of speaking, call baptism a BURIAL. *The other*, The custom of the christians in the near succeeding times, which being more largely and particularly delivered in books, is known to have been generally, or ordinarily, a TOTAL IMMERSION." *Defence of the Hist. of Inf. Bap.* p. 131.

Archbishop TILLOTSON. "Anciently, those who were baptized were immersed and BURIED in the water, to represent their death to sin; and then did rise up out of the water, to signify their entrance upon a new life. And to these customs the apostle alludes, Rom. vi. 2—6." *Works*, Vol. I. Serm. vii. p. 179.

Archbishop SECKER. "BURYING, as it were, the person baptized in the water, and raising him out again, WITHOUT QUESTION, was anciently the more usual method: on account of which, St. Paul speaks of baptism as representing both the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and what is grounded on them—our being dead and buried to sin, and our rising again to walk in newness of life." *Lect. on Catechism*, L. XXXV.

DR. SAM. CLARKE. "*We are buried with Christ by baptism, &c.* In the primitive times the manner of baptizing was by immersion, or dipping the whole body into the water. And this manner of doing it was a very significant emblem of the dying and rising again, referred to by St. Paul in the above-mentioned similitude." *Expos. of the Church Catechism*, p. 294, ed. 6.

DR. WELLS. "St. Paul here alludes to immersion, or dipping the whole body under water in baptism; which he intimates, did typify the death and burial (of the person baptized) to sin, and his rising up out of the water did typify his resurrection to newness of life." *Illust. Bib.* on Rom. vi. 4.

DR. DODDRIDGE, (in whose words we have MR. JOHN WESLEY, and MR. GEORGE WHITFIELD; the former in a *Note*, and the latter in a *Sermon*, on this verse.) "*Buried with him in baptism.* It seems the part of candour to confess, that here is an allusion to the manner of baptizing by immersion." *Fam. Expos.* Note on the place.

DR. WHITBY, (author of the Commentary on the New Testament, and more than forty other learned works.) "It being so expressly declared here, [Rom. vi. 4,] and Colos. ii. 12, that we are BURIED *with Christ in baptism*, by being buried under water; and the argument to oblige us to a conformity to his death, by dying to sin, being taken hence; and *this immersion being religiously observed by* ALL CHRISTIANS FOR THIRTEEN CENTURIES, and approved by our Church, and the change of it into sprinkling, even without any allowance from the author of this institution, or any license from any council of the church, being that which the Romanist still urgeth to justify his refusal of the cup to the laity; it were to be wished, that this custom might be again of general use, and aspersion only permitted, as of old, in case of the Clinici, or in present danger of death." *Note* on Rom. vi. 4.

The apostle uses the figure of *planting* as well as of *burying*, in allusion to baptism, ver. 5. *If we have been planted together, &c.*

Assembly of Divines. "*If we have been planted together:* By this elegant similitude the apostle represents to us, that, as a plant that is set in the earth lieth as dead and immovable for a time, but after springs up and flourishes, so Christ's body lay dead for a while in the grave, but sprung up and reflourished in his resurrection; and we also, when we are baptized, are buried, as it were, in the water for a time, but after are raised up to newness of life." *Annot. in loc.*

Dr. Macknight. "*Planted together in the likeness of his death.* The burying of Christ and of believers first in the water of baptism, and afterward in the earth, is fitly enough compared to the planting of seeds in the earth, because the effect in both cases, is a reviviscence to a state of greater perfection." *Note* on Rom. vi. 5.

Dr. Towerson, speaking of "Plunging the party baptized," adds, it is "A signification which St. Paul will not suffer those to forget, who have been acquainted with his Epistles. For, with reference to that manner of baptizing, we find him affirming, (Rom. vi. 4.) that we are '*buried with Christ by baptism*,' *&c.* And again, (ver. 5.) that, '*if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.*'

Of the Sacra. of Bap. Part III. p. 51.

§ XVII. *Occasional mention of Baptism.*

Eph. iv. 5. One Lord, one faith, one baptism

1 Cor. xii. 13. For by one Spirit we all are baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Gal. iii. 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.

1 Cor. xv. 29. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?

To the Ephesians and Corinthians the apostle is recommending peace and unity; that they should be all of one heart and mind, so that there be no schism in the body, as all were one in Christ. To urge which, he puts them in mind of what they were taught at the first, that there was but "One Lord, one faith, one baptism;" and that, 'all were baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles." We have only to observe here, what we have so frequently noticed before, the apostle puts *faith* BEFORE *baptism*, as Christ the great Lawgiver had done, *He that believeth, and is baptized.* "One faith, one baptism."

In the above verse to the Galatians, the apostle is thought to be

alluding to the change of garments which must necessarily take place after the celebration of the ordinance; which might signify, what is frequently referred to in the Epistles, The putting off the old man of sin and corruption, and putting on the new man of regeneration, and especially of putting on Christ, as *the Lord our righteousness.*—*See Abp. Tillotson's Works*, V. I. Serm. 7. p. 179.

The last verse cited above (1 Cor. xv. 29.) has given rise to many conjectures, and considerable controversy, but which do by no means concern our present inquiries. The following extract on it is submitted to the reader's attention.

Dr. John Edwards. "Some of the Fathers hold, that the apostle's argument in the text is of this sort: If there should be no resurrection of the dead hereafter, why is baptism so significant a symbol of our dying and rising again, and also of the death and resurrection of Christ?—The immersion into the water was thought to signify the death of Christ, and their coming out denoted his rising again, and did no less represent their own future resurrection."

In Dr. Stennett on Addington, p. 105.

§ XVIII. *Baptism illustrated by Events recorded in the Old Testament.*

These are the last passages we find in the New Testament which relate to the subject.

1 Cor. x. 1. Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

1 Pet. iii. 20. The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The better to understand the apostle Paul, in the first passage above, the reader would do well to peruse the place, in the Old Testament, to which he refers, viz. Exod. xiv. From this chapter, and references to it, we learn, that the Israelites went down into the midst of the Red Sea; that the water divided, opening a passage for them, and forming a wall on each side, so that they passed over as on dry ground. We also learn, that the cloud that conducted them, totally hid the Israelites from their enemies; that it was bright and shining toward the former, while it was dark and terrific toward the latter. It does not appear that any water affected the Israelites in any sense whatever; and hence, the word "baptized" must be used, by the

apostle, figuratively. Then we have only to ask, Does the situation of the Jews, "IN the cloud, and IN the sea," best agree to sprinkling *with* water, or a total burial *in* it? Pædobaptists of the highest character in the learned world will answer.

Witsius expounds the place to this effect. "How were the Israelites baptized *in the cloud, and in the sea*, seeing they were neither immersed in the sea, nor wetted by the cloud? It is to be considered, that the apostle here uses the term 'baptism' in a figurative sense; yet there is some agreement to the external sign. The sea is water and a cloud differs but little from water. The cloud hung over their heads, and the sea surrounded them on each side; and so the water in regard to those that are baptized."

Oecon. Fœd. Lib. IV. Chap. x. § 11.

Dr. Whitby. "They were *covered with the sea on both sides*, Exod. xiv. 22, so that both the cloud and the sea had some resemblance to our being covered with water in baptism. Their going into the sea resembled the ancient rite of going into the water; and their coming out of it, their rising up out of the water."

In Pæd. Exam. Vol. I. p. 187.

Mr. Gataker. "As in the Christian rite, when persons are baptized, they are overwhelmed, and, as it were, buried in water—and again, when they emerge, they rise as out of a sepulchre—so the Israelites might seem, when passing through the waters of the sea that were higher than their heads, to be overwhelmed, and, as it were, buried, and again to emerge and arise when they escaped to the opposite shore." *Ut supra.*

The apostle Peter, in the place above cited, is speaking of the *end* and *design* of baptism. If he thought at all of the *mode* of it, we conceive the situation of Noah in the ark, and of the ark in the deluge, when it was borne by the waters of the *great deep*, and beneath the torrents that fell when *the windows of heaven were opened*, (Gen. viii. 11) will better agree to the immersion of a person in water, than to sprinkling two or three particles on the face. So as Noah was here preserved by water, from the general destruction, in like manner is the Christian by baptism, not efficaciously, but in a figurative and declarative sense, when *with it* and *in it* he has a living faith in what his baptism sets forth, namely, the death and resurrection of Christ.

Sir N. Knatchbull. "The proper end of baptism, is the sign of a resurrection, by faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ; of which baptism is a very lively and impressive figure; as also, the ark of Noah, out of which he returned, as it were, out of a sepulchre, to a new life." *Animad.* in Lib. N. T. ad. loc.

Baptism, when thus properly attended to, is *the answer of a good conscience toward God*, as it is an act of obedience to his word and will, as revealed in the Scriptures. Not, says the apostle, the mere washing in water, which is of no importance of itself, can but at best cleanse the outward man; but a baptism, accompanied with the effectual converting power of the Holy Ghost.

CONCLUSION.

Containing a short Examination of the Rise and Grounds of Pædobaptism.

We have now, my reader, "searched the Scriptures" throughout, as our Lord and Saviour directs; and have faithfully quoted, in this pamphlet, every passage that contains any information, either as to the SUBJECTS or MODE of this ordinance; and in this we have laid before you what we conceive *The Scripture Guide to Baptism*,—the guide GOD himself gives you; and as it is a subject in which the word of GOD ALONE, and human wisdom and reason, in no measure, can direct us, it is the christian's ONLY guide.

The two inquiries, therefore, proposed at our setting out, namely, "Who were baptized," and "in what manner," as recorded in the New Testament, we are now empowered to answer: We have nowhere found, through all this sacred book, ANY ONE person baptized, (Christ excepted) that we have the slightest reason to suppose, was not FIRST instructed in the doctrines of the gospel, and had professed to *believe;* but of almost every individual, this is either expressly testified, or so implied as to leave no ground for dispute. And, as to the mode, we have nowhere met with a single verse or word which indicates the application of water by pouring or sprinkling; but whenever any thing is found descriptive of this ordinance, *immersion*, as the word *baptism* undeniably signifies, (see p. 7.) is plainly implied in circumstances, and supported by allusions.

If you, my reader, have been brought up and educated as a Pædobaptist, you will, I conceive, be disposed, after reading the foregoing pages, to ask the following questions. The limits of this pamphlet do not admit but of a few words in answer: the subject will remain for your mature consideration. I shall generally cite, as heretofore, Pædobaptist divines, and other learned writers, in confirmation of the replies made to your questions, and sometimes insert such extracts as the best and only answer.

I. RESPECTING THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

1. *Question.* In the Scriptures you have cited, I certainly have not found any instance of the baptism of infants; but is there not IN ALL THE NEW TESTAMENT a *single instance* of it, nor *command* for it?

BISHOP BURNET. "There is no express precept or rule given in the New Testament for baptism of infants."

Expos. of Articles, Art. xxvii.

MR. S. PALMER. "There is nothing in the words of institution, nor in any after accounts of the administration of this rite, respecting the baptism of infants: there is not a single precept for, nor example of, this practice through the whole New Testament."

Answer to Dr. Priestly on the Lord's Supper, p. 7.

LUTHER. "It cannot be proved by the sacred Scripture, that in

fant baptism was instituted by Christ, or begun by the first christians AFTER the apostles." (*Pæd. Exam.* V. II. p. 4.) See the extracts at p. 34 of this pamphlet.

2. If this be admitted, what is to be made of the following passage which is so commonly urged in support of infant baptism? (Mark x. 14.) *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.*

Answer. Christ did not baptize these children, for he never baptized at all; (John iv. 2.) nor had he commanded this practice upon his disciples, or they would not now forbid them to be brought: nor is there a word of baptism in all the connexion.

POOLE'S CONTINUATORS. "We must take heed we do not found infant baptism upon the example of Christ in this text; for it is certain that he did not baptize these children. Mark only saith, He took them up in his arms, laid his hand on them, and blessed them." *Annot.* on the place, in Matt. xix. 14.

BURKITT. "They were brought unto Jesus Christ: but for what end? Not to baptize them, but to bless them." *In loc.*

3. But are not the children of believers said to be HOLY? (1 Cor. vii. 14.) "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." If "holy" they are surely proper subjects of baptism.

Answer. The apostle is here removing a doubt which some christians entertained at Corinth, whether it was lawful for believing persons to abide with their unbelieving husbands or wives; as, in a similar case, the Jews, under the law, were commanded to separate. The apostle requires that the believer should not depart, if the unbeliever be pleased to abide; *for the unbelieving husband*, he adds, *is sanctified by the wife;* or rather, *has been sanctified to the wife*, &c. That is, as they were united according to the holy law of God, he was thereby made, and still continues to be, her lawful husband; as much so now as before her conversion, or as if both were converted. Then follows, as the consequence of this lawful union, "else were your children unclean, but now are they holy," that is, else they would be born of unlawful intercourse, but now they are *lawfully begotten*, according to God's holy will, in the ordinance of matrimony.

ST. AMBROSE interprets the passage. "The children are holy, because they are born of lawful marriage."

In Tombes's Exercitation, p. 12.

SUARES and VASQUES. "The children are called *holy*, in a civil sense: that is, legitimate, and not spurious. As if Paul had said, If your marriage were unlawful, your children would be illegitimate. But the former is not a fact; therefore not the latter."

In Pæd. Exam. V. II. p. 373.

I request my reader to observe, it is not said the children are holy,

because the *believing*, but the *unbelieving* parent is sanctified: and as this sanctification can only be understood in a civil or legal sense, no more can that which flows from it, or is consequent upon it; and therefore the passage interprets itself.

You cannot mean to say, that the children of believers are *in any sense* better, or more holy *by nature* or *by birth*, than other children: that real spiritual holiness is *propagated* from parents to children. Then would not such children need conversion, nor the merits of the blood of Christ—much less need they the baptism of water, which is the figure of cleansing from sin. (See Acts xxii. 16—26.) And hence, if this be the sense you attach to this passage, so far from its forming an argument for the baptism of these holy children, it would be an argument against it.

But that there is no real holiness conveyed from parent to child is taught by the unerring pen of inspiration, in the language of the devout Son of pious Jesse,—"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psal. li. 5.) St. Paul, including himself with all the people of God, puts them all on a level with mankind at large, as to their state of nature,—"We were BY NATURE the *children of wrath*, even as others." (Eph. ii. 3.) Mere legitimacy of birth, to which the apostle alludes in the passage in question, is never urged as an argument for baptism; and real, spiritual holiness, we have proved, none by nature possess. A thousand pædobaptist writers might be cited to attest this truth. We have only room for one:—

MR. DORRINGTON. "Although the parents be admitted into the new covenant, the children born of them are not born within that covenant, but, are, as all others, born in a state of rebellion and misery."*

Note on 1 *Cor.* vii. 14, *prepared by Rev. John L. Dagg; approved and published by the Directors of the Bapt. Gen. Tract Society.*

* In the controversy about infant baptism it is agreed on both sides, that none should be baptized but those who have a scriptural right to the ordinance. It is moreover agreed, that all believers have a scriptural right. The issue of the controversy depends therefore upon the decision of this point: Do the holy scriptures any where allow the right of being baptized to some, who cannot claim it as believers, namely, the unbelieving infant children of a believer? In conducting the controversy to its issue, the pædobaptists, who affirm that such infants have this right from scripture, are bound to prove their affirmation. By no rule of fair reasoning are the baptists bound to prove the negative. Nevertheless the negative can be proved, and, strange as it may seem, it can be proved by this very text, which has been so frequently and so confidently urged in support of the pædobaptist cause, and has been relied on by many as the chief pillar of that cause. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit, with which truth may at all times successfully defend herself; but error, awkward and imbecile, is in danger of committing suicide, when essaying to use this effective weapon.

Before we proceed to prove what has just been proposed, it may be necessary to admonish the reader, that if, in his judgment, we should fail in our attempt, still our cause will have lost nothing. The laws of controversy do not require us to explain this text. We can readily prove, that the doctrine of infant baptism is not in it; and when we have done this nothing more can be demanded of us. A pædobaptist might adduce Rev. xiii. 18, to prove his doctrine, and then call upon us to explain the mystery of this text, laugh at our attempts, and triumph at our failures, as if his cause were thereby established: yet every one would perceive his triumph to be vain, and that a text does not prove infant baptism merely because we cannot explain it.

Although pædobaptists have generally agreed in supposing, that the holiness of

4. But if there are no passages in the New Testament that authorize infant baptism, will not the covenant of God, made with Abraham and his seed, to be their God in all generations, (Gen. xvii. 7.) be a sufficient ground for it?

the children mentioned in this text (1 Cor. vii. 14.) refers to church membership, and expresses either the fact of their having been baptized or their right to that ordinance; yet they have differed considerably in their attempts to adjust the other parts of the verse to this sense. The truth is, that no such adjustment is possible. If holiness means a right to baptism, then the unbelieving parent, who is expressly said to be sanctified or holy, ought to be baptized as well as his children. It is therefore doing violence to the passage to press it into the cause of infant baptism. According to the plan of our author, the testimony of a pædobaptist writer shall be given on this point.

MACKNIGHT. "Our translators seem here to have understood the terms *sanctified*, *unclean*, and *holy*, in a federal sense, which, indeed, is the common opinion. But, first, it is not true in a federal sense, that the unbelieving party in a marriage is sanctified by the believing party; for, evidently, no one hath a right to the blessings of the gospel covenant by the faith of those to whom they are married. In the second place, it is as little true, that the children, procreated between believing and unbelieving parents, become *unclean* by the separation of the parents, and *clean* by their continuing together, as the apostle asserts, if by *unclean* we understand exclusion from the covenant, and by *clean*, admission into it. For the title, which children have to be members of the covenant, depends not on their parents living together, but on the faith of the believing parent." *Note, in loc.*

Baptists have generally coincided with Mr Pengilly, in the interpretation which he has given above. Much respect is due to it, because it has obtained the general suffrage of our learned men, and also of learned pædobaptists, as he has shown by quotations from their writings. Yet against this interpretation the following objections may be urged.—1. *Lawfully begotten* is, to say the least, an unusual sense of the term *holy*. 2. The unlawfulness of matrimonial converse, *after* the conversion of one parent, would not prove that the children, *before* that event, had been unlawfully begotten. 3. Nor is it clear that it would prove this with respect even to the younger children, since such converse might be unlawful as against ceremonial purity, and yet not unlawful as against the seventh commandment. 4. To prove that the parents are lawfully married, because their children are lawfully begotten, is to prove a thing by itself. There is another view of this scripture, which we consider more satisfactory than any of the preceding. We shall attempt to lay it before our readers.

The Jews considered all Gentiles to be unclean, and thought it unlawful for a Jew to be in the house, keep company, or eat with, or touch a Gentile. By some means, possibly from the influence of Judaizing teachers, the church at Corinth seems to have been agitated with the question whether the same rule ought not to be established to regulate the intercourse of the members of the church with other persons; that is, whether the church ought not to decide, that all who were without were unclean to them who were within; just as Gentiles were unclean to Jews; and that therefore it was inconsistent with christian purity to dwell, keep company, or eat with, or to touch them. While this question was undergoing discussion in the church, it was perceived that it involved a very important case. Some of their members were married to unbelievers, and if such a rule should be established, these members would be compelled to separate from their unbelieving husbands or wives. Although the lawfulness of the marriage was not questioned, yet it would be unlawful for a believing husband to dwell with his wife, until God had converted her. The church resolved, probably after much discussion of the question, to write to the Apostle respecting it. This letter he had received, as appears from the first verse of this chapter. On the general question of intercourse with unbelievers he treats in the fifth chapter, and decides that, to keep company or eat with persons who make no pretension to religion is not unlawful, and that, were all such persons to be esteemed unclean, and their touch polluting, christians must needs go out of the world. On the particular case of those members of the church who were married to unbelievers the Apostle treats in the chapter before us. He decides in v. 12 and 13 that they may lawfully dwell together, and in v. 14, for the conviction and silencing of any members of the church, who might object to his decision, he in substance says; *the unbelieving husband is not unclean, so that his wife may not lawfully dwell with him: the unbelieving wife is not unclean, so that her husband may not lawfully dwell with her If they are*

for believers are Abraham's spiritual seed, consequently they and their seed come under the promise.

Answer. God did promise to be a God to Abraham and to his seed, and was faithful to his word. But though peculiar favours of a *temporal* and *external* nature, were bestowed on Abraham's seed, the Jews at large, more than any other nation of the earth, (which it will not be necessary here to enumerate,) yet the Lord was God, in

unclean, then your children are unclean, and not one parent in the whole church must dwell with or touch his children, until God shall convert them; and thus christians will be made to sever the ties that bind parents to their children, and to throw out the offspring of christian parents into the ungodly world from their very birth, without any provision for their protection, support, or religious education.

It will be perceived in the preceding interpretations that the phrase *your children* is taken in a different sense from that which it obtains in any of the interpretations usually offered. It is here supposed to refer to the *whole church*. Had the Apostle designed to speak of those children only, who have one parent a believer and the other an unbeliever, he would have said (τεκνα αυτῶν) *their children*, instead of (τεκνα ὑμῶν,) *your children*. In addressing the church, and in giving general precepts, he uses the pronouns *ye* and *you*. See preceding chapter throughout, and verses 1 and 5 of this chapter. But in v. 8. where he gives directions applicable to particular cases, although he introduces the phrase, "I say *to* the unmarried and widows," he makes reference to these persons, not by the pronoun *you*, but *them:* "It is good for *them* to abide even as I." The same mode of speaking he continues to use as far down as to the verse in question: "let *them* marry,—let *him* not put her away,—let *her* not leave him." After the same manner he would have said, "else were *their* children unclean," had he intended only the children of such mixed cases of marriage as are referred to in the preceding part of the verse What further confirms this opinion, is, that in the original text the substantive verb is in the present tense; "your children *are* unclean,"—a mode of speaking more suited for the stating of a parallel than a dependant case.

The general principles of the preceding interpretation fall in precisely with the course of the Apostle's argument commenced in the 5th chapter. When these principles have been established, it is not of vital importance to the sense of the passage to determine the translation of the preposition εν. Many have translated it *to* as it is in the very next verse. This sense accords well with our interpretation. The unbelieving husband is sanctified to the wife, just as it is said in Titus i. 15, "*unto* the pure all things are pure." But perhaps the more literal rendering, *in*, will give the Apostle's sense more accurately. While both parents lived in unbelief they were unclean to themselves, and to each other: "unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled." Titus i. 15. According to the Jewish rules respecting ceremonial cleanness the conversion of one party would not render the other party holy. But in gospel ceremonies it is different. By the abrogation of the Jewish ceremonial law, and by the conversion of the wife, the *unbelieving husband* (ἡγιασται) *has become holy*, not in himself, but (ἐν τῃ γυναικι) *in the wife*. That the Jews considered Gentiles unclean as stated above, may be proved from various passages of scripture. See Acts x. 28, xi. 3. John xviii. 28. Gal. ii. 12. Dr. Adam Clark states in his note on John xviii. 28, "The Jews considered even the *touch* of a Gentile as a legal defilement."

It may now be asked, where is the proof which we propose to draw from this text against infant baptism? We have already proved that it makes nothing for it. On the contrary, it is clearly implied, in the Apostle's argument, that all the children of the Corinthian christians had no nearer relation to the church than the unbelieving husband of a believing wife. He declares that their cases are parallel; and that rules of intercourse, which would require the believing husband to separate from his unbelieving wife, would require believing parents to separate from their children. But there is no conclusiveness in this argument, if the children had been consecrated to God in baptism, and brought within the pale of the church: for then the children would stand in a very different relation to the church and to their parents from that of the unbelieving husband or wife. Therefore, unless we charge the Apostle with arguing most inconclusively, *infant baptism* and *infant church membership* were wholly unknown to the Corinthian church, and if to the Corinthian church, unquestionable to all the churches of those times.

See also Tract No. 44, page 24

a *spiritual, experimental*, and *saving* sense, only to such of Abraham's seed as had the faith of their father Abraham. The following scriptures will prove it beyond all doubt.

Rom. ix. 6—8. "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: that is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." (Ch. iv. 12.) He is "the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision ONLY, but who ALSO walk in the steps of that faith of our Father Abraham." (Gal. iii. 7.) "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. (ver. 29.) "And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Hence Abraham's *spiritual* seed are not Abraham's own children, if destitute of faith; and certainly not the unregenerate posterity of believing Gentiles, as it depends, in no measure, on carnal descent; but such are they, of any nation, who have Abraham's faith; or, in the most decisive language, are BELIEVERS IN CHRIST. Hence, we cannot be at a loss to know, if that promise to Abraham bears at all on the subject of baptism, whose opinion and practice it supports. *See answer to Question* 7.

5. But are not children admitted and made members of the church of Christ by baptism?

Answer. If you mean by the *church of Christ*, "the redeemed of the Lord amongst mankind," and this is the only church of Christ the scriptures describe, then you will easily perceive it impossible for baptism to *make* or *constitute* any members of that church. Many who do not observe baptism are, by the real evidences of the christian, members of Christ's church: and that there are *very many* who have been baptized,* and have no relation to Christ, is too, too evident.

DR. WHITBY. "No man is indeed a member of Christ's kingdom, who is not truly regenerate." *Note* on John iii. 3.

CLAUDE. "None but those true believers, I would say, those who join to their external profession of christianity, a true and sincere piety, ARE REALLY the church of Jesus Christ."

Defence of Reform. P. I. p. 69.

6. But is not baptism, as well as the Lord's supper, a SEAL of the new covenant, to the person baptized?

Answer. It is commonly so thought, but it is a great and dangerous error. Neither baptism nor the Lord's supper are called *seals*, in the sacred pages: they of themselves produce no effect, and leave no impression. The blood and Spirit of Christ alone are the seals of the new covenant: by the former the covenant is ratified, and by the latter our interest ascertained and secured.

MR. BAXTER. "Some—do think that we ought not to call the

* The word *baptized*, here and elsewhere, when sprinkling of infants is referred to, is used, not as the real sense of the word, but in compliance with the common use of it.

sacraments *seals*, as being a thing NOT TO BE PROVED by the WORD."
Apology against Blake, p. 118.

BISHOP HOADLY. "The real blood of Christ, as shed for us, or in other words, his death, is the only seal of the covenant."
In Doctor Brett's Account of Sacram. p. 155.

7. But were not infants admitted members of the Old Testament church by circumcision? and shall the privileges of the Jewish church exceed those of the christian?

Answer. The church or congregation of God under the old economy [which the whole nation of the Jews collectively is sometimes called] is divided in the Scriptures, into two parts:—1. They who are of the circumcision ONLY. 2. They who are NOT of the circumcision ONLY, but who ALSO walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham, [Rom. iv. 12.] So the covenant and promises were two fold:—1. Relating to a kingdom and privileges of this world, common to *all* Jews. 2. Relating to the true knowledge and enjoyment of God, peculiar to the *pious part* who had the faith of Abraham. Hence "there was (as the great *Vitringa* observes,) an external and carnal covenant, under the old economy, besides an internal and spiritual covenant." Now circumcision was designed, as one chief object of it, to be an *abiding testimony* that the persons were the legal subjects of this highly favoured kingdom, and, consequently, had a right to the external privileges of it. But nothing but the faith of Abraham entitled, in the present state, to the blessings of the latter covenant. None but such as were *Jews inwardly*, and *whose circumcision was that of the heart*, constituted the true spiritual church of God, amongst the seed of Abraham.

But the new covenant, and the whole kingdom of Christ under the New Testament, is ENTIRELY SPIRITUAL. Christ himself testifies, "My kingdom is not of this world." (John xviii. 36.) And St. Paul adds the authority of Jeremiah to his own, to prove that the new covenant was not according to the old, as far as related to *external* things; but *spiritual*, consisting in having the divine laws written on their hearts, in the forgiveness of their sins, and in a saving knowledge of the Lord their God. (*See* Heb. viii. 8—13. Jer. xxxi. 31—34.) Wherefore, as circumcision under the law, entitled only to external privileges, and the blessings of a temporal kingdom, and did not make the persons circumcised members of God's true, spiritual, redeemed church; and as the New Testament dispensation has no worldly kingdom or external privileges attached to it, but is entirely spiritual, the argument for infant membership now, grounded on circumcision in the old economy, is absurd, *and without the least foundation in Scripture.* Faith in Christ Jesus alone avails to secure the blessing of the covenant of grace, in any age of the world: "*for in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith, which worketh by love.*" Gal. v. 6.

VENEMA. "From the difference between the former and the present economies, it will clearly appear, that the genius of the New Testament is abhorrent from an external covenant; wherefore it

answers only to the SPIRITUAL PART of the old economy."
In Pæd. Exam. Vol. II. p. 204, 245.

Dr. OWEN. "Regeneration is expressly required in the Gospel, to give a right and privilege to an entrance into the church of Christ. —Neither the church nor its privileges [being] continued as of old *by carnal generation.*" *On Heb.* vii. 11.

8. But if you refuse to bring children to baptism, do you not keep them away from Christ, and in case of their dying in infancy, endanger their salvation?

Answer. We do not. Christ said, in the days of his flesh, of UNBAPTIZED children, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And he received these unbaptized children "into his arms," and "blessed them," and sent them away, still *unbaptized;* nor did he utter a word about their baptism; and he is the same Saviour still. Can a similar passage be found of *baptized* children? and who will say that baptism is necessary that Christ may receive them?

If persons die, incapable of exercising faith in the merits of Christ, either by infancy or mental incapacity, we know it is "the blood of Jesus alone that cleanses from all sin," "neither is there salvation in any other." (1 John i. 7, Acts iv. 12.) And to suppose their salvation is effected, or in any way assisted, by the sprinkling of water, is not only opposed to the express declarations of scripture, but most dishonourable to the Divine Redeemer, and mistrustful of his ability and grace.

9. But if you object to infant baptism, for want of express authority in the word of God, ought you not, from the same principle, to object to female communion?

Answer. We ought not: for the gospel makes no difference in SEX. If one infant were said to be baptized in scripture, all infants would be baptized from this example, without distinction of sex; for the New Testament has no such distinction, but opposes it, and declares, whether 'MALE or FEMALE, *ye are all ONE in Christ Jesus—Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ,*' Gal. iii. 26, 28. Such children of God, whether male or female, we admit to both ordinances, because they answer the *character* required, and because the same Book that requires the character, forbids distinction of sex, or any other difference whatever.

10. If nothing can be found in the New Testament to authorize infant baptism, upon what authority does it rest?

Answer. Upon mere tradition, or human authority.

DR. FIELD. "The baptism of infants is therefore named a *tradition*, because it is not expressly delivered in Scripture, that the apostles did baptize infants; nor any express precept there found that they should do so." *On the Church*, 375.

Bishop Prideaux. "Pædobaptism rests on no other divine right than *Episcopacy.*" *Fascicul. Contro.* Loc. iv. § iii. p. 210.

11. If this be admitted, when was infant baptism supposed to be introduced?

Answer. Not till near the end of the second, or in the beginning of the third century, after Christ.

Curcellaeus, (a learned divine of Geneva, and Professor of Divinity.) "The baptism of infants in the two first centuries after Christ was altogether unknown; but in the third and fourth was allowed by some few. In the fifth and following ages it was generally received. The custom of baptizing infants did not begin before the third age after Christ was born. In the former ages no trace of it appears—and it was introduced without the command of Christ." *In Pæd. Exam.* V. II. p. 76.

Salmasius and Suicerus. "In the two first centuries no one was baptized, except, being instructed in the faith, and acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, he was able to profess himself a believer; because of those words, *He hath believed and is baptized.*" *Ut Supra.*

Venema. "*Tertullian* has no where mentioned pædobaptism among the traditions or customs of the church, that were publicly received, and usually observed.—For in his book, *De Baptismo*, [supposed to be written A. D. 204.] he dissuades from baptizing infants, and proves the delay of it to a more mature age, is to be preferred. Nothing can be affirmed with certainty, concerning the custom of the church before *Tertullian*, seeing there is not any where, in more ancient writers, that I know of, undoubted mention of infant baptism." *Hist. Eccles.* T. III. S. ii. §. 108, 9.

The passage alluded to, containing the FIRST MENTION of infant baptism, is the following:—

Tertullian. "The delay of baptism may be more advantageous either on account of the condition, disposition, or age of any person, especially in reference to little children. For what necessity is there that the sponsors should be brought into danger? because either they themselves may fail of their promises by death, or be deceived by the growth of evil dispositions [in the children.] The Lord indeed says, *Do not forbid them to come to me.* Let them therefore come when they are grown up; when they can understand; when they are taught to what they are to come. Let them become christians when they can know Christ. Why should this innocent age hasten to [the sign of] the remission of sins? Men act more cautiously in worldly things; so that divine things are here intrusted with whom earthly things are not. Let them know how to seek salvation, that you may appear to give to one that asketh."*

* The reader may examine my accuracy by the orginal:—"Pro cujusque per sonæ conditione ac dispositione, etiam ætate, cunctatio baptismi utilior est, precipue tamen circa parvulos. Quid enim necesse est sponsores etiam periculo ingeri? Quia et ipsi per mortalitatem destituere promissiones suas possint, et proventu malæ indolis falli. Ait quidem Dominus, *Nolite illos prohibere ad me venire.* Veniant ergo dum adolescunt, veniant dum discunt, dum quo veniunt docentur: fiant christiani, dum Christum nosse potuerint. Quid festinat innocens ætas ad remissionem

Now I request my reader to consider—1. That there is confessedly no mention of infant baptism in the writings of any of the fathers, till Tertullian, in the beginning of the third century; though the baptism of believers is repeatedly found.

2. That the first mention of infant baptism is in a passage of direct opposition to it, and disapprobation of it, not only as of something *without the least divine authority*, but as of a *new* and *unreasonable* custom.

It has been said that infant baptism was handed down as a tradition from the apostles, though not contained in scripture.

VENEMA shows the utter improbability of it. "Tertullian," says he, "dissuades from baptizing infants—which he certainly would not have done, if it had been a tradition, and a public custom of the church, seeing he was VERY TENACIOUS of traditions; nor, had it been a tradition, would he have failed to mention it. I conclude, therefore," he adds, "that pædobaptism CANNOT be plainly proved to have been practised before the times of Tertullian; and that there were persons in his age who desired their infants might be baptized, especially when they were afraid of their dying without baptism: which opinion Tertullian opposed, and BY SO DOING, INTIMATES THAT PÆDOBAPTISM BEGAN TO PREVAIL."*

Ut supra.—In Pæd. Exam. V. II. p. 79, 80.

12. Upon what pretences, or for what design, was baptism administered to infants when first introduced?

SALMASIUS, (the very learned historian and critic.) "An opinion prevailed that no one could be saved without being baptized; and for that reason, the custom arose of baptizing infants."

In Pæd. Exam. Vol. II. p. 128.

DR. OWEN. "Most of the ancients concluded, that it [baptism] was no less necessary unto salvation, than faith or repentance itself."

On Justification, Chap. II. p. 173.

SUICERUS, (a learned divine, and professor of Greek and Hebrew at Zurich.) "This opinion of the absolute necessity of baptism, arose from a wrong understanding of our Lord's words, *Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.*" *In Pæd. Ex.* V. II. p. 129.

RIGALTIUS, (whom Dr. Fell, bishop of Oxford, and Dr. Wall, granted to be *a man of great learning.*) "In the Acts of the Apostles, we read that *both men and women were baptized*—without any

peccatorum? Cautius agetur in sæcularibus; ut cui substantia terrena non creditur divina credatur. Norint petere salutem, ut petenti dedisse videaris.

De Baptismo, c. xviii.

* Infant baptism was not the only innovation about the days of Tertullian. *Consecrating* the baptismal water; the use of *sponsors;* the *imposition of hands* at baptism; *material unction* at confirmation; *prayers and oblations* for the dead, &c. were all mentioned for the FIRST TIME, by Tertullian; and hence learned Pædobaptists tell us, that certainly these customs BEGAN about Tertullian's time, no earlier writer having noticed them. *See Pæd. Exam.* V. II. p. 108. Why then may we not come to the same conclusion, for the VERY SAME REASONS, as to baptizing infants?

mention being made of infants. From the apostolic age, therefore, to the time of Tertullian, the matter continued doubtful. And there were some who on occasion of our Lord's saying, *Suffer little children to come to me*, (though he gave no order to baptize them) did baptize even new-born infants; and, as if they were transacting some secular bargain with God Almighty, brought sponsors, and bondsmen to be bound for them, that when they were grown up, they should not depart from the christian faith." *In Dr. Wall's Hist. of Inf. Bap.* V. II. p. 13, and *Pæd. Ex.* V. II. p. 73.

EPISCOPIUS. "Pædobaptism was not accounted a *necessary* rite till it was determined so to be in the Melevitan council, held in the year 418."—*Pæd. Exam.* V. II. p. 129.—RIGALTIUS intimates, that even the *propriety* of infant baptism was commonly doubted, till Cyprian's days, about fifty years after Tertullian; that then, "most men were of Cyprian's mind, that even new-born children ought to be made partakers of the laver of salvation; which was pitched upon in the decree of this synod (at Carthage, in A. D. 253) and so THE DOUBT WAS TAKEN AWAY." *In Dr. Wall as above.*

From the foregoing questions and answers, it would seem, in accordance with the candid testimonies and acknowledgments of the most learned pædobaptists, that infant baptism has neither a *command* nor an *example* in scripture to authorize it—that the passages urged in favour of it have no relation to the subject, the subject not being *once named* in the whole of the chapters—that it cannot *seal* the blessings of the new covenant, nor bring into the church of Christ —that Christ does not require children to be baptized in order to his receiving them, for that he took unbaptized children into his arms and said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven"—that infant baptism was unknown in the christian church, for, at least, nearly TWO HUNDRED YEARS—and that where we find it *first named*, it is in direct opposition to it, and disapprobation of it, as to a novel, unscriptural, and inconsistent practice—That the *propriety* of it was DOUBTED till the council of Carthage, A. D. 253, and that it was not universally deemed *necessary* till 418; and then by the *decrees of men*, NOT THE WORD OF GOD, the doubts of pleasing or offending GOD in it, were at length taken away.

II. RESPECTING THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

1. As learned pædobaptists acknowledge the want of plain authority in the scriptures for administering baptism to infants, do they also acknowledge the want of scripture authority, and the example of the primitive christians, for sprinkling?

DEYLINGIUS. "It is manifest that while the apostles lived, the ordinance of baptism was administered—not by sprinkling, but by immersion." *In Pæd. Exam.* V. I. p. 217.

Bishop Stillingfleet. "Rites and customs apostolical are altered—as dipping in baptism." *Ibid.* p. 215.

Mr. J. Mede. "There was no such thing as sprinkling used in baptism in the apostles' days, nor many ages after them."
Discourse on Titus iii. 5.

Venema. "It is without controversy that baptism in the primitive church was administered by immersion into water, and not by sprinkling." *In Pæd. Exam.* V. I. p. 212.

Altmannus. "In the primitive church persons to be baptized were not sprinkled but entirely immersed in water." *Ibid.* p. 214.

2. What is the custom of the modern Greek church in this ordinance, who, doubtless, will be well acquainted with the import of the original word Βαπτίζω, used by our Lord, and practise accordingly?

Answer. The Greek church does uniformly administer this ordinance by immersion, generally thrice, in the name of each of the persons of the Trinity.

Sir P. Ricaut. "Thrice dipping or plunging, this church holds to be as necessary to the form of baptism, as water to the matter."
Present state of the Greek Church, p. 163.

Dr. J. G. King. "The Greek church uniformly practises the trine immersion, undoubtedly the most primitive manner."
Rites and Cerem, of the Greek Church in Russia, p. 192.

Dr. Wall. "The Greek church, in all the branches of it, does still use immersion.' *Hist. Inf. Bap.* V. II. p. 376. Ed. 3.

Buddeus. "That the Greeks defend immersion, is manifest, and has been frequently observed by learned men; which *Ludolphus* informs us is the practice of the Ethiopians."
Theolog. Dogmat. L. V. C. i. § 5.

3. What countries particularly are they where this ordinance is still administered by immersion?

Dr. Wall, after observing, as above, that the Greek church uses immersion, adds, "And so do ALL other christians in the world except the Latins. All those nations of christians that do now, or formerly did submit to the authority of the Bishop of Rome, do ordinarly baptize their infants by pouring or sprinkling; and though the English received not this custom till after the decay of popery, yet they have since received it from such neighbour nations, as had begun it in the time of the Pope's power. But ALL other christians in the world, who never owned the Pope's usurped power, DO, AND EVER DID, DIP—in the ordinary use." "And if we take the division of the world from the three main parts of it, *all* the christians in Asia, *all* in Africa, and about *one third* part of Europe, are of the last sort, (i. e. practise immersion,) in which third part of Europe are comprehended the christians of Græcia, Thracia, Servia, Bulgaria, Rascia, Wallachia, Moldavia, Russia, Nigra, and so on; and even

the Muscovites, who, if coldness of country will excuse, might plead for a dispensation with the most reason of any." *Ut Supra.*

4. How long was immersion continued as the general practice among all christians? See WHITBY, p. 38, 9.

BOSSUET. "We are able to make it appear, by the acts of Councils, and by the ancient Rituals, that for THIRTEEN HUNDRED YEARS, baptism was thus [by immersion] administered throughout the whole church, as far as was possible.

In Dr. Stennet's Answer to Russen. p. 176.

STACKHOUSE. "Several authors have shown, and proved,—that this immersion continued (as much as possible) to be used for THIRTEEN HUNDRED YEARS after Christ.

History of the Bib. P. VIII. ch. i. p. 1234, 5.

That εις and εν do not always signify *into* and *in*, and απο and εκ out of, will sound as a trifling criticism after these observations.

5. Is immersion or sprinkling best fitted to express the *spiritual signification* of this ordinance?

Answer. Baptism was an image of our Lord's sufferings—of his death, burial, and resurrection—of our being spiritually washed and cleansed from sin by the agency of the Holy Spirit—of our being dead and buried as to our former course of life, and raised up to live to God—and of the burial and resurrection of the body,—all of which immersion is best calculated to signify. Sprinkling earth on a coffin cannot be a *burial* of it, nor sprinkling water a washing or cleansing—nor can it be a figure of our Lord's overwhelming distress. See WITSIUS, page 10 and 14: and the extracts at p. 36 and 37.

VOSSIUS. "All the particulars that we have mentioned concerning the signification of baptism, will appear with sufficient perspicuity in the rite of immersion; but not equally so, if mere sprinkling be used." *Disputat. de. Bap.* Disp. III. § 10.

MR. ALEX. ROSS. "Immersion into the water represents to us the death and burial of Christ, and therefore our mortification; likewise the very emersion out of the purifying water, is a shadow of the resurrection of Christ, and of our spiritual quickening."

In Pœd. Exum. V. I. p. 153.

BISHOP HOPKINS. "Those who are baptized with the Spirit, are, as it were, *plunged* into that heavenly flame, whose searching energy devours all their dross, tin, and base alloy." *Ut Supra*, p. 273.

MR. LEIGH. "*Baptized*; that is,—dip you in the ocean of his grace; opposite to the sprinkling which was in the law." *Ibid.*

WITSIUS. "It must not be dissembled that there is IN IMMERSION a greater fruitfulness of signification, and a more perfect correspondence between the sign and the thing signified."

Œcon. cov. L. IV. C. xvi. § 13.

6. Is immersion considered as prejudicial, or at all hazardous, in reference to health?

SIR JOHN FLOYER, (a learned and eminent physician.) "It must be accounted an unreasonable nicety in the present age, to scruple either immersion or cold bathing as dangerous practices. We must acknowledge, that He that made our bodies, would never command any practice prejudicial to our healths; but, on the contrary, he best knows what will be most for the preservation of our healths, and frequently takes care of our bodies and souls in the same command." *History of Cold bathing*, p. 11, 51. He elsewhere observes, "by reasons taken from the nature of our bodies, from the rules of medicine, from modern experiences, and ancient history, that dipping in cold water is not only safe, but very useful."

See Dr. Wall's Hist. of Inf. Baptism, V. II. p. 375.

DR. CHEYNE. "I cannot forbear recommending cold bathing, and I cannot sufficiently admire how it should ever have come into such disuse, especially among christians, when commanded by the greatest Lawgiver that ever was, under the direction of God's Holy Spirit, and perpetuated to us, in the immersion at baptism by the same Spirit; who with infinite wisdom in this, as in every thing else that regards the temporal and eternal felicity of his creatures, combines their duty with their happiness."

Essay on Health, p. 100, 1.

7. If immersion was what our Lord designed, and set by his example, and can be proved to be used by his first followers, must it not be profane to ridicule this practice as superstition or bigotry; as well as attempts to oppose it vain, if not proofs of ignorance?

DR. WALL. "This [immersion] is so plain and clear, by an infinite number of passages, that, as one cannot but PITY THE WEAK ENDEAVOURS of such pædobaptists as would maintain the negative of it; so also we ought to disown and show a dislike of the profane scoffs which some people give to the English antipædobaptists, merely for their use of dipping—when it was, in all probability, the way by which our blessed SAVIOUR, and, FOR CERTAIN, was the most usual way by which the ancient christians did receive their baptism. It is a great want of prudence as well as of honesty to refuse to grant to an adversary what is CERTAINLY TRUE, and may be *proved so*. It creates a JEALOUSY of ALL the rest that one says."

"How large a signification soever the word Βαπτίζω may have to signify washing in general, it is plain, that the ordinary and general practice of John, the apostles, and the primitive church, was to baptize, by putting the person INTO the water, or causing him to GO INTO the water. Neither do I know of ANY PROTESTANT who has denied it; and but VERY FEW MEN OF LEARNING that have denied, that where it can be used with safety of health, it is the most fitting way."

Hist. of Inf. Bap, V. II. p. 351, *and its Defence*, p. 129.

OBJECTIONS

Generally urged against the common practice of, and arguments for, believers' baptism.

1. The apostles, when they went out into the world to preach the gospel, went amongst the heathen unregenerate nations, and of course the baptism of adults would be their general practice, and hence it is no wonder we do not find in their history the baptism of infants; but it is not so now, where the christian religion has been long established.

Answer. To whom then is the gospel of salvation *now* sent? To christians? To regenerate nations? Are not unconverted persons now, to whom the gospel is sent, as much "sitting in darkness and the shadow of death"—blinded by the god of this world, and seeking death in the error of their ways, as the untaught heathen? What our Lord said to Nicodemus is equally applicable to any man, and every man, in any or every age of the world: Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God:" (John iii. 3.) "For (adds the apostle Paul) the scriptures saith, whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed: for there is *no difference* between the Jew [though born of pious parents and well instructed in the doctrines of the Bible] and the Greek [or Gentile, brought up in idolatry and ignorance;] for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." "What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no not one, &c."

(Rom. x. 11, 12, and iii. 9, 10.)

2. But can it be proved that any of the children of believing parents, in the first centuries, were not brought to baptism in their infancy?

Bishop Taylor affirms: "There is no pretence of tradition that the church in all ages did baptize all the infants of Christian parents. It is more certain that they did not do it always, than that they did it in the first age. St. Ambrose, St. Hierom, and St. Austin, were born of christian parents, and yet not baptized until the full age of a man and more." The learned prelate goes on to tell us the foundation of the argument of *Apostolical Tradition* for baptizing infants: "But that there is a tradition from the apostles to do so, relies but on *two* witnesses, Origen and Austin; and the latter having received it from the former, it relies wholly on *one single testimony*, which is but a pitiful argument to prove a tradition apostolical.

He is the first that spoke of it: but Tertullian that was before him, seems to speak against it, which he would not have done, if it

had been a tradition apostolical. And that it was not so, is but too certain, if there be any truth in the words of Ludovicus Vives."

In Dr. Wall's Hist. of Inf. Bap. Vol. 2. p. 34.

3. Those who observe only the baptism of believers, I have sometimes thought, seem to be regardless of their children's spiritual interest, in not devoting them to God in baptism.

Answer. If we do for them what God *has required* of us, (see Psalm lxxviii. 1—7) and "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," (Eph. vi. 4.) we shall certainly discharge our duty, and shall doubtless find this sufficient, without doing what God *has* NOT *required.* And as to devoting them to God in baptism, we have a complete answer in the following excellent passage of

DR. OWEN. "It is the authority of God alone that can make any worship to be religious, or the performance of it to be an act of obedience to him. God would never allow the *will* and *wisdom* of any of his creatures should be the RISE, RULE, or *measure* of his worship, or any part of it, or any thing that belongs unto it. Hence the scripture abounds with severe interdictions against them who shall presume to do, or appoint any thing in His worship, besides or beyond his own institution.—Divine institution ALONE is that which renders any thing acceptable unto God. A worship *not ordained* of God, is NOT ACCEPTED of God."

On Heb. i. 6. § 10. *In Pæd. Exam.* V. 1. p. 27

4. In your pages I have found a great number of pædobaptist writers, who seem, in these passages, to give up the question into your hands: had they no arguments for infant baptism, which was *their own* practice? And should you not produce them?

Answer. They doubtless had their arguments for infant baptism, or they would not have practised it; and I should have been *glad* to have laid them before you at length, did my limits admit of it.—I assure you, you would not have thought the cause I espouse weakened by them, but very much to the contrary. The chief reason for which I have produced these authors, is this, *to grant us, by concession, to have the plain authority of* GOD'S WORD, both by *precept* and *precedent* throughout; and to acknowledge that their practice had NOT *this authority.* (See extracts p. 34 and 40.) In other parts of their writings you do not suppose they contradict what they here so positively affirm; and as to other arguments not grounded on the IMMOVEABLE ROCK of inspired authority, but on *something else*, I could not allow room to transcribe them on these pages. I will however inform you in few words what some of these learned writers urged in favour of their own practice.

DR. WALL, MR. SELDEN, and DR. HAMMOND, suppose christian

baptism was borrowed from *Jewish Proselyte baptism*, which infants received. Sir NORTON KNATHBULL rejects the proselyte plunging, and recurs to *circumcision*. VITRINGA and VENEMA object to circumcision as a ground for infant baptism, and suppose, with WITSIUS, that some infants are *in a relative state of grace*. Bishop PRIDEAUX and HEIDEGGER contended, that infants have the *faith and the covenant*, though not of the covenantees. Mr. BAXTER makes the *faith of parents* the condition of their children's church membership and salvation; and Mr. HENRY considers a *profession of faith* made by parents, an infant's title to baptism; but Archbishop LEIGHTON opposes this as 'neither clear from scripture or sound reason.' CALVIN, MELANCTHON, and generally the Lutheran churches, (says BINGHAM) own a sort of *faith in infants*. The church of England, and, of course, most of her divines, proceed on the profession of faith made *by the sureties*, the godfathers and godmothers. An anonymous author thought children by baptism, 'brought into the covenant of grace.' This, another opposes, and maintains that they are 'in the covenant of grace before their baptism;' and a third opposes both the former, on the ground that many thus described, and baptized, grow up, and live and die the servants of Satan.

See extracts from the above-named writers, and many others, in which they have given us the reasons and grounds of their practice, in BOOTH'S *Pæd. Exam.* V. II. p. 491—499.

5. The body of christians, called Quakers, as they practise the ordinance in no form, nor on any subjects whatever, ought to be impartial judges in this controversy. What say they on this question?

The following are approved authors of that denomination:—

ROBERT BARCLAY. "As to the baptism of infants, it is a mere human tradition." *Apology*, Proposition xii.

GEORGE WHITEHEAD. "What great hypocrisy and insincerity are those persons justly chargeable with, in the sight of God, angels, and men, in their not practising that baptism they have pleaded for from the practice of the apostles! But, instead thereof, rantism, or sprinkling of infants, to make them thereby *members of Christ*, and of his church militant. *Truth Prevalent*, p. 125.

WILLIAM PENN. "There is not one text of scripture to prove that sprinkling in the face was water baptism, or that children were the subjects of water baptism in the first times."

Defence of Gospel Truths, against the Bp. of Cork, p. 82.

THOMAS LAWSON, (a man who has made the most careful inquiry into this subject, and written largely on it.) "Sprinkling of infants is a case unprecedented in the primitive church; an irreptitious custom sprung up in the night of apostasy, after the falling away of the primitive order.—See the author of rantism; that is, sprinkling, not Christ, nor the apostles, but *Cyprian;* not in the days of Christ, but some two hundred and thirty years after." *Baptismalogia*, p. 69, 75. *See Pæd Exam.* Vol. II. p. 12, 13, 82.

6. But I have been told that pædobaptists do not deny the propriety of believers' baptism, but do most readily admit of it, and that all those scriptures you produce for the baptism of believers are *common to both parties*, and hence they should be laid aside and never be urged: that the question entirely depends on what relates to infant baptism?

Answer. We have been desired, it is true, to lay aside those scriptures which relate to believers' baptism, for the reason you have assigned; but it must be evident, that as there is not a single verse nor word in scripture relating to infant baptism, (see BURNET, PALMER, and LUTHER, at p. 40.) the demand is nothing less, in effect, than to close and lay aside the sacred pages altogether; and then to decide on the nature of this divine ordinance, not by what the scriptures, our *only guide* contain on it,—not by what the apostles and the divine INSTITUTOR himself have given for our direction, but what some men *think*, or others *assert* respecting it. How vain and inconsistent is such a demand!!

7. But can it be admitted that so many bodies of christians, and so many eminent, learned, and pious ministers as have supported for ages, and do to this day support infant baptism—that they can all be wrong?

Answer. Roman Catholics refer us to the MANY NATIONS over which *their religion* prevails, and the *many hundreds of years* that their doctrines were the uninterrupted faith of all Christendom.—They tell us that the protestant religion is but of modern date, and nothing in extent in comparison of theirs. Does this prove the catholic superstitions to be the truth, and the protestant doctrines errors? The Chinese urge the same argument against christianity; but is their argument admitted? There are many pædobaptist divines, many cited in these pages, whose learning and piety I venerate, but they are *but men*, and liable to err; and I dare not put them in the place of CHRIST, or their writings in the place of GOD'S WORD. They will not be accountable to God for me, nor I for them. It will not be *according to their books* that men will be judged at the last day, but according to the BOOK OF GOD, which sacred book, the Judge of that day has himself commanded us to "search" for ourselves, and to call no man Rabbi, or Father, or Master on earth, "for ONE is our Master, even CHRIST." See John v. 39. Matth. xxiii. 7—10.

8. But I have, I hope, received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is the *thing signified* by water baptism; and to receive now *the sign*, after long possessing the *thing signified*, is surely untimely.

Answer. What you deem as superseding, or doing away the ne-

cessity or propriety of baptism, St. Peter urged as the *very reason* why Cornelius and his friends should be baptized: (see p. 26.) "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which HAVE RECEIVED the HOLY GHOST as well as we?" Such persons are the only proper subjects of both the ordinances, whom the Holy Spirit has renewed; and hence, in raising *an objection* against the ordinance, you have assigned, according to the apostle Peter, the *purest* and most *indisputable reason* why it should be observed. —See WHITBY on Acts x. 47.

9. But baptism cannot do me any good,—it cannot cleanse me from sin, nor entitle me to heaven. You allow it is not necessary to salvation.

Answer. Baptism could not do our LORD any good,—it could not cleanse him from sin; he was "without sin"—it could not entitle him to heaven; he had "all power in heaven"—yet Jesus "came from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized," and said of *himself* and of *his people*, "thus it becometh US to fulfil all righteousness." If then our LORD and SAVIOUR did not think it *unnecessary*, how unbecoming it is in any of us, who are indebted to him for all the happiness of this life, for our deliverance from sin and its awful consequences, and for all the felicity and glory of eternity, differently to treat it! I do not say that baptism can *do you any good;* much less save the soul. It is sufficient to say CHRIST observed it, and solemnly enjoined it on all his disciples. What it *can do* for us, He certainly knew, and His authority is surely sufficient,—*sufficient*, I hope, to answer and ever to silence, the above, and EVERY OTHER objection.

Final address to the candid and pious inquirer.

HAVING now completed my design in laying before you, my reader, every passage of God's word which expressly relates to the subject of CHRISTIAN BAPTISM, as well as having referred you to the arguments for a practice which the Scripture does not authorize and the objections to the continuance of what it does plainly establish, I must take my leave of you, by entreating your serious attention to the following things.

(1) CHRISTIAN BAPTISM, being an institution of CHRIST JESUS, is not a subject to be treated with neglect or indifference; and surely much less with the contempt which some have impiously poured on it. So great an honour, (says a learned writer,) was never conferred on any ceremony, on any appointment of God, as on this ordinance when the LORD was baptized in the Jordan; see p. 9. And no ordinance was ever more solemnly and peremptorily enjoined, than CHRIST enjoined this on his disciples, when he was ascending from them into heaven, p. 15.

(2) Do not allow the observations contained in this pamphlet *to influence you* in the smallest degree, on a subject of so sacred a nature

I would advise you to peruse the passages of scripture again, omitting all the rest, and then form your sentiments, and govern your practice, by the pure unerring word, and that alone.

(3) In case of you being brought to agree with me as to believers' baptism, and you should resolve to tread in the footsteps of your Redeemer, remember that you do not attach to this ordinance any *saving* importance, considered *simply* in itself. On the other hand, let it not be deemed an act of *submission* or *condescension* on your part, but rather as a high honour and privilege to follow so bright, so glorious an example.

(4) Let there be no undue delay in coming to this ordinance, if such you see the will of Christ respecting you. "Arise and be baptized," was the address to Saul; and Saul's prompt obedience is worthy the imitation of every christian. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."—(1 Cor. xi. 1.)

(5) Let your future walk and conversation conform to the profession you make in this ordinance. As your profession is not *by sureties*, but *your own*, and before witnesses, it is particularly binding and obligatory: (See p. 35, 36.) How attentive then should you be, that you do no dishonour to the sacred NAMES into which you are baptized! Let other christians, who differ from you, be esteemed and loved by you. They are accountable, not to you, but to God, for their sentiments and conduct; and if they are interested in his love, redeemed by the same Lord, they should, as *your* brethren, share your warmest affection. Above all, let CHRIST be the object of your supreme attention: obey him as your Lord, trust in him as your Saviour, follow him as your example, and if found *faithful unto death*, he has promised and *will give you a crown of life*.—Rev. ii. 10.

HYMNS.

Christ Baptized in Jordan.

1 IN Jordan's tide the Baptist stands,
Immersing the repenting Jews;
The Son of GOD the rite demands,
Nor dares the holy man refuse;
Jesus descends beneath the wave,
The emblem of his future grave.

2 Wonder, ye heav'ns! your Maker lies
In deeds conceal'd from human view;
Ye saints, behold him sink and rise,
A fit example thus for you:
The sacred record, while you read,
Calls you to imitate the deed.

3 But lo! from yonder op'ning skies,
What beams of dazzling glory spread!
Dove-like, th' Eternal Spirit flies,

And lights on the Redeemer's head
Amaz'd they see the pow'r divine
Around the Saviour's temples shine.

4 But hark! my soul, hark and adore!
What sounds are those that roll along?
Not like loud Sinai's awful roar,
But soft and sweet as Gabriel's song?
"This is my well-beloved Son,
"I see well pleas'd what he hath done."

5 Thus the Eternal FATHER spoke,
Who shakes creation with a nod;
Through parting skies the accents broke,
And bids us hear the SON of GOD:
O hear the awful word to-day,
Hear, all ye nations, and obey!

Not ashamed of Christ.

1 JESUS! and shall it ever be
A mortal man asham'd of thee!
Asham'd of thee, whom angels praise,
Whose glories shine through endless days!

2 Asham'd of Jesus! sooner far
Let ev'ning blush to own a star;
He sheds the beams of light divine
O'er this benighted soul of mine.

3 Asham'd of Jesus! just as soon
Let midnight be asham'd of noon:
'Tis midnight with my soul till he,
Bright Morning-Star! bid darkness flee.

4 Asham'd of Jesus! that dear friend,
On whom my hopes of heav'n depend!
No; when I blush—be this my shame,
That I no more revere his name.

5 Asham'd of Jesus! yes I may,
When I've no guilt to wash away,
No tear to wipe, no good to crave,
No fears to quell, no soul to save.

6 Till then—nor is my boasting vain—
Till then I boast a Saviour slain!
And O may this my glory be,
That Christ is not ashamed of me!

7 His institutions would I prize,
Take up my cross—the shame despise;
Dare to defend his noble cause,
And yield obedience to his laws.

THE PRACTICAL USES

OF THE

ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM.

Extracts from a Circular Letter of the Northamptonshire (England) Baptist Association.

That Christian baptism is properly administered only by immersion, and to those who make a credible profession of faith in Christ, it is no part of our present design to prove. Addressing ourselves to you, we shall take each of these particulars for granted. The sole object to which we now request your attention is, the *influence* of this ordinance, (where it produces its proper effects) in promoting piety in individuals, and purity in the church.

There is no part of true religion that is merely speculative: the whole is designed and adapted to sanctify the soul. We may presume, therefore, that if baptism be an ordinance of God, and of perpetual obligation in the church, it is of importance to Christian practice.

But it is not on presumptive evidence that we wish to rest the improvement of this institution, any more than the institution itself: neither shall we go about to connect with it acknowledged duties by imaginary alliances; but shall confine ourselves to those uses of the ordinance which are actually made, or suggested in the New Testament. We could address many things to parents, and things of importance too, on bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: we could also urge it upon the children of believers, that they were cast upon the Lord from their earliest infancy: but as we find nothing of this kind in the Scriptures *connect-*

ed with baptism, however important these things would be in their place, they would be altogether irrelevant while treating on this ordinance.

Baptism is a Divine institution pertaining to the kingdom of the Messiah, or the gospel dispensation. John received it "from heaven," and administered it to the Jews, who, on his proclaiming that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand," confessed their sins. Jesus gave sanction to it by his example; and, after his resurrection, when all power in heaven and earth was committed to him, confirmed, and extended it to believers of all nations. Whatever circumstantial differences there might be, therefore, between the baptism of John and that of Christ, they were substantially the same. There were things in former ages which bore a *resemblance* to it; as, the salvation of Noah and his family in the ark, the passage of the Israelites through the sea, divers washings or bathings prescribed by the Mosaic ritual, &c. but the thing itself existed not, till it was revealed to the immediate forerunner of Christ.

The principal design of it appears to be, *a solemn and practical profession of the Christian religion.* Such was the baptism of John, who "said unto the people, that they should believe on him who should come after him; that is, on Christ Jesus." And such was that in the times of the apostles. Paul, addressing himself to the churches in Galatia, who, after having professed to believe in Christ, cleaved to the Mosaic law as a medium of justification, thus speaks: "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith: but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have* PUT ON CHRIST." The allusion is to the putting on of apparel; as when one that enters into the service of a prince, puts on his distinguishing attire: and the design of the sacred writer is to remind those of them who had before professed the Jewish religion, that by a solemn act of their own they had, as it were, put off Moses, and put on Christ. There is a putting on of Christ which is internal, and consists in relinquishing the former lusts, and being of the mind

of Christ; (Romans xiii. 14.) but that which is referred to appears to be an open *profession* of his name, to the renouncing of every thing that stood in competition with him. It was therefore true of "as many as had been baptized," whether they abode in the truth or not. And even their being "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," seems to express what they were in profession, rather than what they were in fact. They had by their baptism disowned all dependance on the privileges of birth, and the adoption which pertained to them as the children of Abraham; declared their acquiescence in that power, or privilege, to become the sons of God, which the gospel imparts to them that believe. The mention of this was perfectly in point, as it greatly heightened the evil of their defection. The amount is, *That as many as were baptized in the primitive ages were voluntary agents, and submitted to this ordinance for the purpose of making a solemn and practical profession of the Christian faith.* It was their oath of allegiance to the King of Zion; that by which they avowed the Lord to be their God. Hence a rejection of it involved "a rejection of the counsel of God." (Luke vii. 30.) The sin of the Pharisees and lawyers consisted not in their refusing to submit to baptism as unbelievers; but in embracing the Messiah, and so putting on the badge of his profession. Their rejection of the sign was justly construed as a rejection of the thing signified; as when a rebel refuses to take the oath of allegiance, it is construed as a refusal of submission and subjection to his rightful prince.

Such, brethren, is the profession we have made. We have not only declared in words, our repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; but have said the same things by our baptism. We have solemnly surrendered ourselves up to Christ, taking him to be our prophet, priest, and king; engaging to receive his doctrine, to rely on his atonement, and to obey his laws. The vows of God are upon us. We have even sworn to keep his righteous judgments; and, without violating the oath of God, cannot go back. If it be a sin not to confess the Lord Jesus, through fear or shame, it is a still greater sin after we have confessed him, to turn from the holy commandment.

The religion of Jesus consists partly of *truths* to be believed, and partly of *precepts* to be obeyed; and the ordinance of baptism furnishes motives for a faithful adherence to both.

We have been baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit;" and have thus practically avowed our belief in them. It was at Jordan that the Father bore witness to his well-beloved Son, and that the Holy Spirit descended upon him; hither, therefore, in the early ages, men were directed to repair, that they might learn the doctrine of the trinity. If we relinquish this doctrine, we virtually relinquish our baptism. Of this there need not be a more convincing proof than the inclination which has been discovered by those who have renounced the doctrine, to disuse the form of baptizing in the name of the Sacred Three.

We have also professed by our baptism to embrace that great salvation which is accomplished by the united influence of the Sacred Three. We have in effect declared our acquiescence in the freeness of the Father's grace, in the all-sufficient atonement of the Son, and in the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit: for these are the principal things by which, in the New Testament account of the economy of grace, each is distinguished. Nor can we renounce them, without virtually renouncing our baptism.

The immersion of the body in *water*, which is a purifying element, contains a profession of our faith in Christ, through the shedding of whose blood we are cleansed from all sin. Hence, baptism in the name of Christ is said to be "for the remission of sins." (Acts ii. 38. xxii. 16.) Not that there is any such virtue in the element, whatever be the quantity; nor in the ceremony, though of Divine appointment: but it contains a *sign* of the way in which we must be saved. Sin is washed away in baptism in the same sense as Christ's flesh is eaten, and his blood drank, in the Lord's supper; the sign, when rightly used, leads to the thing signified. Remission of sin is ascribed, by Peter, not properly to baptism; but to the *name* in which the parties were to be baptized. Thus also Saul was directed to "*wash away his sins*, calling on *the name of the Lord.*" Nearly akin to this is the

idea conveyed to us in the first epistle of Peter: "The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were *saved by water.* The like figure whereunto baptism doth *now save us,* (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter iii. 20, 21.) The salvation of Noah and his family by the ark was a *figure* of our salvation by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The ark for a time was surrounded, as it were, with waters from above, and from beneath: but it survived its trial, and those who were in it were at length brought safe to land. Christ also for a time sustained the deluge of wrath due to our sins; but survived the trial, rising triumphantly from the dead, and thereby saved us from everlasting death. Of this great transaction baptism is *a like figure.* It is another sign of the same thing. The resemblance of baptism by immersion to the death and resurrection of Christ, and the suitableness of one to signify our faith in the other, are manifest. It is thus that baptism doth *now save us.* not as putting away the filth of the flesh; (for all the virtue contained in the ordinance itself is "the answer of a good conscience toward God") but as affording a sign of our salvation by the victorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And as we are taught by our baptism to adhere to the doctrine of God our Saviour, so we are furnished with motives to adorn it by a *holy conversation.* Thus it is introduced in the epistles to the Romans and Colossians as a sign of our being *dead,* and buried, to the principles and pursuits of the present world; and, by faith in Christ, *raised* as into a new world. (Romans vi. 3—12. Col. ii. 12.) The *death* of Christ is emphatically mentioned as that into which we are baptized—"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his *death?* Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism *into death;* that like as Christ died, and was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Christ's dying *for* sin afforded a most powerful motive for our dying *to* it; and the immersion of the body in baptism,

being "in the likeness" of the former, furnishes an additional motive to the latter.

The leading idea suggested by a death and burial seems to be that of *separation from the world.* There is no greater line of separation than that which is drawn between the dead and the living. The dead know not any thing; and have no portion in all that is done under the sun. Such is the line which is drawn by the faith of the operation of God, between the world renewed and the world depraved; of which, baptism is the appointed sign. If, after this, we are found among evil doers, we may well be considered and shunned as a kind of apparitions, which have no proper concern in the affairs of mortals.

The apostle applied this reasoning against a conformity to abrogated ceremonies. "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" (Col. ii. 20.) The same reasoning is applicable to other things. If we be dead with Christ, why, as though living, are we subject to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, which are of the world? Why are any of us conformed to this world; and not rather transformed by the renewing of our minds? If we be dead, and our life be hid with Christ in God; why are not our affections set on things above, and not on things on the earth? We cannot but express our concern, that persons professing godliness should be carried away by the course of this world, as many are; meanly imitating the ungodly; whose conduct they ought rather to reprove. Such imitation, so far as it operates, contains a virtual renunciation of our baptism. The ideas of baptism and a separation from the world, whether connected by us or not, are strongly associated in the minds of men in general. After this, we cannot unite with them in evil, without drawing upon ourselves their most pointed censures. They may labour to seduce us for the sake of comforting themselves; and while accomplishing their purpose may suppress their private thoughts of us, and even compliment us for our liberality: but if we comply, their pretended esteem will be turned into reproach. Nor ought we to consider this as an evil; but rather as a

mercy. God hath hereby set a hedge about us, which tends more than a little to preserve us from temptation. If any think otherwise, and feel uneasy that they cannot act like other men, without drawing upon themselves the censures of mankind, it is a dark sign that their hearts are not right in the sight of God.

Nor is this ordinance adapted merely to separate between believers and unbelievers, *individually* considered: its design is also to draw a line of distinction between *the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of Satan.* Whatever may be said of baptism, as it is now generally understood and practised, and of the personal religion of those who practise it, it was *originally* appointed to be the boundary of visible Christianity. This is a principle, which, if properly acted upon, would go far to prevent the confounding of the church and the world; and which, consequently, tends more than any thing of the kind to counteract ecclesiastical degeneracy and corruption. Had the Christian church in all ages admitted none to baptism, from whomsoever descended, but those who professed to repent and believe the gospel, it is scarcely conceivable that any others would have been admitted to the Lord's supper: and if so, a stream of corruption which has actually deluged it with antichristianism, would have been diverted at the spring-head. The church might indeed have been corrupted from other causes, but these would have been merely *accidental.* Hypocrites and formalists might have imposed themselves upon it, as they did in some degree in the apostolic age; but they would have been intruders. Whatever of this kind might have existed, believers could not have been *constitutionally* yoked together with unbelievers. The carnal descendants of godly people could not have claimed a place in Christ's visible kingdom. The church could not have become national, embracing as its children all who are born in a Christianized country, without any profession of personal religion. Princes and nobles, if worthy, would have been received into its communion as brethren; but not as rulers or patrons: and if unworthy, refused; even though an exposure to persecution had been the consequence—But if persons be admitted to baptism without any profession of personal religion, or

upon the profession of others on their behalf, their admission to the Lord's supper will in most cases follow as a matter of course. Indeed it *ought* to follow: for though amongst evangelical dissenters these things are separated, yet from the beginning it was not so. Neither scripture nor the practice of the ancient churches affords a single example of a baptized person, unless his conduct was grossly immoral, being ineligible to communion And if all who are now baptized, be admitted to the supper, the line of separation will be broken; the church will be no longer "a garden enclosed:" but an open wilderness, where every beast of prey can range at pleasure. Thus, indeed, it was foretold it should be. The writer of the Apocalypse, describing the corruptions which should prevail in the visible church during the twelve hundred and sixty years' reign of antichrist, represents it under the form of the *outer court* of the temple being *left out* of the measurement as profane, and *given to the Gentiles to be trodden under foot*, in like manner as the holy place and holy city had been trodden down by the heathen, in the time of Antiochus.

As the principle of believers' baptism, properly acted upon, would prevent the admission of all unconverted characters, except hypocrites and self-deceivers, so it would have its influence in repelling *them*. The habits of some hypocritical characters, it is true, would render it an easy thing to overleap this boundary; but it is equal ly true, that, to others, it would be an effectual bar There are not a few in the religious world, who would like well to be members of a Christian church, especially where the pastor is a man of respectability, provided they could be admitted without drawing upon themselves the laugh of the irreligious. There is reason to believe that many persons of genteel connexions, who wish to be thought religious, and whose consciences approve of believers' baptism, are withheld by this kind of shame from offering themselves to our churches. An ordinance which thus operates, possesses a mark of its pertaining to that kingdom which is "not of this world," and into which it is "hard for a rich man to enter."

As the leading idea suggested by a death and burial is that of *separation* from the world, so the principal

thing denoted by a resurrection is an entrance into a *new* state of being. Such is that "newness of life," of which the emersion of the body from the waters of baptism is a sign, and to which it furnishes an important motive. The religion of Jesus does not consist in mere negatives. It is not enough that we be dead to the world: we must be alive to God. With real Christians, old things are passed away, and all things are become new. Unless our baptism, therefore, be merely a sign, or an unmeaning ceremony, our hopes, fears, sorrows, joys, companions, principles, and pursuits are opposite to those of this world. Even a partial return to it is inconsistent with our baptismal vows. If those who profess to be dead to the world cannot walk in the course of it, without being considered and shunned as a kind of apparitions; those who are alive from the dead cannot return, without resembling a living character who should take up his abode in a sepulchre.

A few general reflections will conclude this epistle.

The baptism of a number of serious Christians is an interesting and impressive spectacle. Often on such solemn occasions, have we witnessed the falling tear; not only from the parties baptized, and others immediately connected with them, but from indifferent spectators. We could appeal to the consciences of many serious Christians, whether they did not receive their first convictions of the reality of religion at such opportunities? We could appeal to all of you who have been in the habit of attending the administration of this ordinance, whether it has not frequently furnished you with the most solemn and tender reflections? Has not the sight of a number of young Christians, offering themselves willingly to the Lord, touched the secret springs of holy sensibility? Yes: you have been reminded by it of your own solemn engagements, and led to inquire in what manner they have been fulfilled. You have remembered the days of your espousals, when you first went after your Saviour, as in the wilderness, and have been sweetly impelled to renew the solemn surrender. Nor have your reflections been confined to yourselves: you have considered these new accessions to the church of God as supplying the place of others that were taken

away, and as fulfilling the promise, "Instead of thy fathers, shall be thy children." Thus, when the ranks of an army in a besieged city are thinned by repeated engagements, and the hearts of survivors are ready to faint, a reinforcement arrives: a body of new companions throw themselves in to its relief, and inspire them with new vigour.

Further: If the foregoing remarks be just, the importance of believers' baptism must appear in a very different light, from that in which some have represented it. If the ordinary acknowledgments of many who live in the neglect of this ordinance, and disapprove of the zeal of others who submit to it, may be considered as expressive of their principles, their conduct is not owing to a solid conviction, arising from impartial inquiry accompanied with prayer, that it is unscriptural, or that they have already been baptized according to the institution of Christ; but to a notion that it is of *little or no account.* If it be of little or no account to bind ourselves to the Lord, *in the way of his own prescribing;* to confess his name before men; to avow our being dead to the world, and alive to him; to preserve the church from being constitutionally corrupted, and yoked together with unbelievers; to obey his commandments who saith, "Repent and be baptized, *every one of you:*" and to follow his example who yielded obedience to this institute, saying, "Thus it *becometh us* to fulfil all righteousness"—then may this excuse be admitted. But if these things be important, then is believers' baptism important; and all attempts to depreciate it are offensive in the sight of him who is the Lord and Lawgiver of Zion.

Finally, brethren, it becomes us to beware lest that which is good in itself should, through the corruption of our nature, become an occasion of evil. There is perhaps no temptation more common among religious people, than to think too highly of themselves on account of their advantages. Where such a spirit is cherished, baptism may become an idol, and the table of the Lord itself a snare. It is more than possible that some may so value themselves on account of their baptism, as to make it a substitute for a life of holiness and universal right

ousness. It appears that some amongst the Corinthians approached too near, at least, to this spirit. They had been baptized,—they had eaten and drank at the table of the Lord,—yet they trifled with idolatry, and worldly lusts. "I would not that ye should be ignorant (saith Paul) how all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness.—These things were our examples.—Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall!" (1 Cor. x.) As if he had said, 'Are you members of a community which hath the promised presence of Christ? Our fathers also were *under the cloud.* Hath God interposed in your favour? They *passed through the sea,* as on dry land. Have you been baptized? So where they. They *descended* in a body into the sea; were *buried,* as it were, by the cloud above them, and the waters on each hand of them; and afterwards *ascended* on the other side. Have you been admitted to the holy supper? They also ate of that food, and drank of that stream, the spiritual intent of which was much the same. Yet all this afforded them no security, when they provoked the Divine jealousy. Notwithstanding these privileges they fell, and were destroyed of the destroyer. These things are recorded for *our* admonition.' —Of what account then will our baptism be to us, if instead of being dead to the world and alive to God, we be the reverse? Will baptism save us? No: it will bear witness against us!

And though we may not fall into so fatal an error, as to substitute baptism in the place of holiness, righteousness, and godliness; yet if we cherish a fond conceit of ourselves, magnifying our advantages, to the neglect of a spirit of humble watchfulness; our baptism, instead of aiding us, will become a snare. We do not always act up to our advantages. It is very possible that Christians who are behind us in this particular, may, notwithstanding, be before us in their general character. It were

vain and foolish to imagine, that our possessing the truth in one instance, will secure us from error in every other; or that our fulfilling this command of Christ, however important, will ensure a course of universal obedience.

Let us never forget that, however adapted this or that ordinance, form, or mode of church government, may be to promote our spiritual interests, yet if we rest in the means, they will deceive us; or rather, we shall deceive ourselves. It is the presence of Christ only that can keep us alive, either as individuals, or as churches. While, therefore, we recommend the means which he hath prescribed, we devoutly add, with the apostle, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all!" *Amen.*

THE END.

☞Tracts may be obtained on application to the Agent.

TERMS OF COMMUNION.

Circular Letter of the Hudson River Association, 1824.

Dearly Beloved Brethren,—In accordance with a resolution passed at our last annual meeting, "THE TERMS OF COMMUNION," will claim your attention, as the subject of our present circular address. It is to be regretted that the signs of the times should ever indicate the expediency of presenting *this subject* to your consideration, *in a controversial shape;* but since necessity is laid upon us, we desire to enter upon its investigation with all that alacrity which the love of revealed truth, and supreme regard for Zion's King, and unyielding attachment to the order of his house, are calculated to inspire.

The phrase "communion," or "fellowship," is used in different senses in the sacred writings. It frequently denotes that holy enjoyment of the divine presence, and that soul-comforting participation of the Redeemer's fulness, which it is the privilege of believers to realize. The saints are joined to the Lord *by one Spirit; they draw water out of the wells of salvation; God is their dwelling-place in all generations;* and it is therefore said, *truly their fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* This fellowship does not necessarily stand connected with church government or relationship; it is neither confined to time nor place, nor does it bend to the control of earthly circumstances. It is felt by Jacob with a stone for his pillow; it drives away the fears and pains of the thief upon the cross; it cheers the hearts of Paul and Silas, though beaten with many stripes and thrust into the inner prison; and it converts the desolate Isle of Patmos into a paradise of heavenly rapture. The

terms of this communion, all centre in the rich and distinguishing grace of God.

The expression is sometimes used in a large and comprehensive sense, to describe that fraternal affection and spiritual intercourse, which all those who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth, may righteously maintain with each other. Individuals attached to the different denominations of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Quakers, &c. *may have good reason* to entertain a favourable opinion of each other's Christian exercises; they may unite their efforts to multiply and distribute copies of the Bible, and send the gospel of salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth; they may take sweet counsel together, and be mutual helpers of each others' joy; and their communion will be proportioned to the evidence which the parties furnish, of maintaining a close walk with God. *If we walk in the light. as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another* But as *this fellowship in the Gospel* is enjoyed by individual believers who never unite with a particular church; as it exists in different degrees, according to the strength of their confidence that God has begun a good work in the heart, without any reference to the ordinances or regulations of his house, it is an entirely different thing from *church fellowship*, and is by no means to be confounded therewith.

In modern phraseology the word "*Communion*," is employed, by common consent, as expressive of that fellowship which experimental Christians have with the Saviour of sinners, and with one another, in the ordinance of the Lord's supper; and this use of the phrase seems to be justified by the Apostle's language, 1 Cor. x. 16, *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?* The single point, therefore, which we have now before us is, to answer the inquiry, *What are the indispensable terms of this communion?* or, in other words, what prerequisites of admission to the Lord's supper are marked out, in the New Testament, for the observance of the churches of Christ to the end of the world? To this inquiry we reply, *regeneration, baptism, and a conversation*

such as becometh the Gospel of Christ; and in proof of the correctness of this reply, we appeal to the law and to the testimony.

The children of God are bound to give thanks always to their Heavenly Father, because he hath from the beginning chosen them to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, *whereunto they are called by the Gospel;* and THEN, *as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ;* and to manifest their attachment to the *laws, doctrines,* and *ordinances,* once delivered to the saints. The primitive churches, constituted under the immediate direction of the inspired apostles, were composed of self-condemned sinners, who were by nature children of wrath even as others; but being pricked in their hearts and quickened by the Spirit of God, fled for refuge to the hope set before them in the Gospel. They believed the testimony given of God's dear Son, and having gladly received the truth, *were baptized both men and women.* To the first Gospel church in Jerusalem it is said, *the Lord added daily such as should be saved, and they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* The church at Corinth consisted of those who were *sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, and who called upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.* The members of the church at Colosse, had *put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:* and the brethren at Rome, were *the called of Jesus Christ, beloved of God, called to be saints.* Now if these apostolic churches were erected upon correct principles, (and who so contumacious or schismatic as to deny it?) they are certainly to us infallible guides, and present us with a perfect pattern. If *they* received only such as professed to be born of God, and gave evidence that they were begotten again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, *we* should imitate their example; *and if there come any unto us and bring not this doctrine,* we are commanded *not to receive him into our house, neither bid him God speed;* for he that biddeth him God speed; that

is, he that welcometh to the privileges of the church, *him that abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, is partaker of his evil deeds.* It is therefore an established principle in Baptist churches to require of all candidates for admission, a declaration of what God hath done for their souls; and when satisfactory evidence of a *change of heart* is exhibited, the *first scriptural term of communion*, is elicited by the church. Should this fundamental principle ever be abandoned, we hesitate not to say, the fine gold will become dim, the glory will depart from us, and the vengeance of Him who walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks may be justly apprehended.

That *Baptism* is a "*Term of Communion*," is manifest from the *design* and *order* of that ordinance, as well as from the uniform practice of the apostles.

It is the *design of Baptism*, among other important particulars, to exhibit the existence of a new relationship, and to declare to all around, the interesting fact, that the individual baptized has come out from the world, and enlisted under the banner of Christ. In this view of the subject, it is not merely the answer of a good conscience towards God, but it is also a grateful and public recognition of that grand line of distinction which the Redeemer has established between the *kingdom of darkness*, and that *kingdom which is not of this world. For as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.* Gal. iii. 27. *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.* Rom. vi. 4. As it is evident that a man must enter into the kingdom, before he can be entitled to the immunities of a subject; that he must be received into the fellowship of a particular church, before he can enjoy the privileges of that church; even so, it is equally plain, that *Baptism*, upon profession of faith in the Messiah, must remain an *indispensable term of communion*, until it can be proved that *unbaptized persons* were added to the churches planted by the apostles in different parts of the world. And this will appear yet more abundantly if we consider,—

The order which is uniformly observed in the New

Testament, with reference to Baptism and the Lord's Supper. When the Great Head of the church sent forth his ministering servants to build up his kingdom in our ruined world, he gave them commission in the following words :—*Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* This language is lucid and definite. It directed them *first* to teach, or, as it is elsewhere expressed, *to preach the Gospel to every creature.* When the word preached was accompanied by an unction from the Holy One, men were made wise unto salvation; they were effectually taught; *they were made disciples;* and then, *and not till then*, were the apostles commanded to baptize them. *After this*, they were to instruct them to observe all things enjoined upon them by the Saviour; and among *the all things*, who dare deny to the Lord's supper a place? Since the Redeemer has sufficient wisdom to devise the most suitable ordinances, either for the comfort of his people, or as a test of their obedience; and since all power is given him to make laws in Zion, and fix *the order of their observance;* to his *authority* all Christians should certainly submit. But it is plain that *baptism must precede the communion*, not only because the Lord Christ hath so decreed, but because *this order* is necessary in the very nature of things, if there be an adaptation of the sign to the thing signified. We must first be made alive, before we need bread to sustain life; and in like manner, *the ordinance* which shadows forth *the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost*, must of necessity, go before *that* which holds out to us in a figure the *bread which came down from heaven*, whereof if a man eat, he shall live for ever. That this statement is correct, we most assuredly gather from the unvarying *practice* of the Apostles themselves.

The preaching of Peter, upon a certain notable occasion, produced such an astonishing effect that thousands cried out, *Men and brethren what shall we do to be saved?* The preacher promptly replies, *Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.* What follows? *They that gladly received the word* WERE BAP-

TIZED. After baptism they were added to the church in Jerusalem, *and then*, participated in the communion, or *the breaking of bread.*

The conduct of Paul was precisely similar to that of his brother Peter. He came to Corinth, and taught the word of God among its inhabitants. *Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized.* These baptized believers were then constituted into a gospel church, and kept the ordinance of the Lord's Supper *as delivered to them by the Apostle.* Acts xviii. 1 Cor. ii. 2. If therefore, the *uniform practice* of the Apostles justly challenges our imitation. we must inviolably adhere to the *order* which they have established.

The last term of church communion we have named, is a *godly walk and conversation;* and this position is easily maintained, both upon the principles of reason and revelation. The children of *God are holy brethren: a royal priesthood—a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* This description of them is given by one who cannot err; and it would certainly be incongruous and unnatural for such persons to be *unequally yoked together with unbelievers. How can two walk together except they be agreed? What communion hath light with darkness, and what fellowship hath Christ with Belial?* are questions which need no comment;—they answer themselves. In extending the right hand of fellowship, therefore, a church must be satisfied that the individual soliciting admission has scriptural views of himself, and of God, and of the way of salvation by Christ alone, and of the work of the Spirit, and of the holy tendency of divine truth; and hence we are directed *to mark and avoid those* whose erroneous sentiments cause divisions and offences contrary to the *doctrine which we have learned.* Rom. xvi. Moreover the candidate for church communion must not only *converse* about the things of God in a proper manner, but his *deportment* must correspond with his holy profession. *If any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, we must not keep company with such an one, no not to eat.* 1 Cor. v. 11. and *that course of conduct* which cuts off from the church one who is already a member, must be, by parity of

reasoning, an insurmountable obstacle against admission to its privileges.

Our sentiments with reference to the terms of communion, have, in different ages and countries, occasioned the opprobrious epithets of "bigoted, uncharitable, self-righteous," &c. to be heaped upon us with an unsparing hand; but these are weak and powerless weapons when employed against those who are armed with the sword of the Spirit, *in defence of a divine institution.* We shall close this epistle by replying briefly to some of the most plausible objections which are constantly urged against the sentiments we have advanced.

First objection. "*You lay too much stress upon baptism by making it an indispensable term of communion.*

To this we reply;—We pay no greater regard to it, nor do we give it a higher place in our system, than the Lord Christ hath enjoined, or the Apostles and primitive Christians, by *their example*, have warranted. And here we may ask, *why should more stress be laid upon the Lord's supper than upon baptism;* and why should many professing Christians so earnestly advocate the observance of the former, while they pervert, or entirely neglect the latter? Were not both ordinances instituted by the same Lord, and do they not, therefore, come to us clothed with the same authority? We know that Pædobaptists are in the habit of calling baptism a *non-essential; an external rite; a mere ceremony;* &c. If this be true, we would inquire, what more is the supper? *Is it a Saviour?* But if these sacred institutions, be indeed, *as we believe*, signs of important and essential truths, baptism is unquestionably as significative as the breaking of bread, and exhibits, *emblematically*, a large proportion of the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel. Upon an investigation of the New Testament, we find that baptism, of the two, is much the more frequently mentioned, and baptized believers are affectionately and repeatedly exhorted, *so to walk* in Christ Jesus their Lord, as in *that ordinance they have put him on.* Taking then the Holy Book as our only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, we have the highest authority for saying, We give to baptism, which Christ appointed as the first gospel institute, as a test of his children's obe-

dience, and a lively emblem of their renewal by the Holy Ghost, *exactly the situation* which the master of the house has designated; and with a *thus saith the Lord* sounding in our ears and penetrating our hearts, it is not possible that we should listen to the doctrines or commandments of men.

A second objection, charges us with causing *a separation between the children of the same Heavenly Father.*

Suppose we grant that baptism is an insuperable bar rier in the way of our communing, *in church capacity*, with unbaptized persons; does it necessarily result from this concession, *that the blame* righteously attaches itself to the skirts of our garments? Shall those who understand and keep the ordinances, in their nature, order, and design, as they were originally delivered to the churches, *be condemned?* and those who depart from them, and embrace a "figment of their own imagination," *be justified? God forbid!* We hesitate not to say, most explicitly, that baptism is a *separating line*, but it is one of the Lord's own making, and we endea vour constantly, both by preaching and example, to en lighten the minds of our Pædobaptist friends on the subject. We warn them of their errors; we hold up to them the truth; we point them definitely to chapter and verse; and we exhort every believer among them, quite as often as they wish to hear us, *to arise and be baptized and wash away their sins*, (in a figure,) *calling upon the name of the Lord.*—We are honest and sincere in these declarations, and in making them thus plainly, it must be evident to the candid and judicious, that we cannot have any *by-ends, or measures of mere expediency* to promote. We wish the truth, and the truth alone as it is in Jesus, every where to prevail; and we are grieved in heart, that those whom we respect and love on so many other accounts, should, in this particular, persist in treading the pathway of disobedience, boldly *rejecting the counsel of God* in not being baptized according to his commandment. If our veracity and Christian affection, touching this whole matter, be unjustly called in question, we are permitted to adopt the language of a Baptist, and say: *Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with*

fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. 2 *Cor.* i. 12.

A third objection states, that it is *the Lord's table, and therefore we have no right to hinder those who wish to approach it.*

That it is the *Lord's table,* is the appropriate and sufficient *answer* to this objection. Were it *ours,* we might cheerfully admit to it the objector and his friends; but since it is confessedly *the Lord's table,* we dare welcome to it only such as HE invites. The disciples were baptized before Christ instituted and administered to them the supper. John the Baptist was sent to prepare a people for the Lord, and the disciples were evidently among the number of those who *justified God;* and if so, they must have been necessarily *baptized with the baptism of John;* otherwise they could not have been obedient hearers and doers of the word, and imitators of the example of their Lord and master. Luke vii. 29. Mat. iii. 23, 17. 1 Peter, ii. 21. In perfect conformity with this view of the subject, are the words of Peter: *Wherefore of these men which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from* THE BAPTISM OF JOHN, *unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.* Acts, i. 21, 22. Here we learn that Peter and his brethren *began their Christian profession at the baptism of John,* and hence the inference is irresistible, that there were none but Baptists with our Lord when he gave them the bread and cup, and said, *Do this in remembrance of me.* As the sacred oracles, therefore, uniformly teach that Christians, in the Apostles' days, *were baptized before they came together in one place for the breaking of bread,* we are confirmed in the sentiment, that the only guests invited to partake of this feast are such as have been, upon profession of their faith, buried with Christ in baptism; *nor can we approach the table with the unbaptized,* without acting in direct opposition to the precept and example of Him, *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

A fourth objection is presented in this shape: *We*

conscientiously believe ourselves to be baptized; you are not the judge; to our own master we stand or fall.

This objection brings us at once to the question, *What is Christian baptism?* Is it sprinkling, or is it pouring? With the New Testament in our hands, we most confidently and unhesitatingly answer, *neither. It is immersion* in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. And here we cannot but say to our cavilling friend, *when were you baptized?* "In infancy." Are unconscious babes, or the unbelieving, unprofessing seed of pious parents, proper subjects of baptism? Whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, upon the testimony of God we are obliged to answer, *no.* —These things were not so in the beginning; for it is written, *Then they that gladly received the word were baptized;* Acts 2. And the Jailor *was baptized, he and all his, straightway, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.* Acts xvi. Consequently those who believe and rejoice in Christ Jesus are, *according to the Scriptures,* the only persons to whom we are authorized to administer the ordinance of baptism. But we are told that whether Pædobaptists have perverted christian baptism, both in its design and subjects, or not, *we have no right to judge.* This is equivalent to saying that an individual ought to be admitted to church fellowship *because he thinks himself entitled to that privilege,* without reference to the opinion which the church may entertain upon the subject. It requires no argument to prove the obscurity of this position. To adopt it would speedily ultimate in the dissolution of any society.— That there must be an agreement in sentiment between a church and a candidate for admission to its privileges; and that the church *must necessarily judge* of the candidate's qualifications, are both self-evident and scriptural truths. Since Christ then has commanded us to *hold fast till he come, and to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,* we are under the most sacred obligations *to exhort one another daily; to warn the unruly; to look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God;* and to be very careful, not only to venerate his institutions ourselves, but also that they be observed in

their purity, by all such as solicit communion with us at the table of the Lord.

A fifth objection, viz. *That the saints will all commune together in Heaven, and ought therefore to do so on earth,* is thought to be a very strong one, but really we are not able to perceive its force. We rejoice in the anticipation of that perfect union and uninterrupted fellowship, which *the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in Heaven,* shall, to all eternity, enjoy; but whatever may be the terms of communion in the world of glory, we are fully persuaded that *while here,* the revealed will of Christ, and not what shall take place after death, should be the only man of our counsel, *a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path;* and we are equally certain, that when we see Jesus as he is, and love him as we ought, the least of his commandments will not be esteemed either *trifling or nonessential.*

The last objection which our limits will allow us to notice, supposes that *strict communion is inconsistent with brotherly love and Christian forbearance.*

By adverting to the distinction made in the commencement of this letter, between communion with God, our fellow-christians, and a particular church, this objection will be stripped of all its difficulties. It will there be seen that real believers may hold converse with the Deity, and love each other as brethren in the Lord, without walking together in church relationship. *The Baptists* differ from all others in their views of a Gospel Church, and the scriptural qualifications for admission to its privileges; but *these views* we believe to be coincident with the directions of the Saviour, and the example of Apostles and primitive Christians, and having maintained them in the face of persecution, danger, and death, from the days of Paul to the present moment, we cannot abandon them, until convinced that we have hitherto misapprehended altogether the language of the New Testament. Nor can this course of conduct *be righteously construed into a breach of brotherly love and Christian forbearance,* until it can be proved that we ought to love men more than we love God, and that the *charity which rejoiceth not in inquity, but rejoiceth in* THE TRUTH, requires us to disregard the commandments

and dispense with the ordinances of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Finally, brethren, Farewell! Adhere steadfastly to the doctrines and ordinances of Christ, as he hath delivered them to us; and as there is *one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, so we beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The Lord be with you all, Amen.*

THE END.

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A PERSUASIVE

TO

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP;

OR,

THE DUTY OF BELIEVERS

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THERE are many individuals, who appear to have received the truth in love, and whose conduct in other respects is such as becomes the gospel, but who live in the habitual neglect of its positive institutions. For real or avowed unbelievers to do this, would occasion no surprise; but that those, who profess to love our Lord Jesus Christ, and who cherish the hope of eternal life through him, should thus seem to disregard his authority, is not a little surprising, and may well be considered as one of the peculiarities of the present state of religion amongst us. Nothing of this kind appeared in the times of the apostles. Converts to Christianity were recognized by an open profession of the name of Christ. and admission to the fellowship of the church. The ardour of primitive believers admitted of no hesitation or delay: they never stopped to inquire how little they might do for Christ, and yet go to heaven; nor thought of reckoning this or the other ordinance not essential to salvation: but, burning with love to the Redeemer, and zeal for his righteous cause, *they made haste, and delayed not to keep his commandments.* No sooner was Saul converted, than he *essayed to join himself to the disciples.* Anticipating the pleasure that would result from an obedience to the divine command, and desirous of being numbered amongst the followers of the Lamb, the Eunuch, on believing that Jesus was the Son of God, exclaimed, with an agreeable surprise, *See, water! what doth hinder me to be baptized?* The Philippian Jailer, *believing in God, with all his house, was baptized, he and all his straightway*, even the same hour of the night in which Paul had

spoken to them the word of the Lord. When the Samaritans *believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.* In those times, as many as *gladly received the word, were baptized; and continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* But how different is all this from the reluctance and supineness of professors in later times, who seem glad of any plea that may exempt them from obligation, or extenuate their remissness in respect to an open profession of the name of Christ, and a practical submission to the institutions of his church! For a change so novel in the visible state of Christianity, we are led to inquire the cause; and as a means of correcting so prevalent an evil, to point out the importance of gospel fellowship, as binding upon the followers of Christ.

First, Let us inquire THE REASONS WHY THOSE WHO PROFESS TO BELIEVE IN CHRIST FOR SALVATION, LIVE IN THE NEGLECT OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

It will be readily apprehended, that, by Fellowship in the Gospel, something more is meant than a friendly intercourse with individual Christians, or a stated attendance on the solemnities of the Sabbath; that it relates to that state of union peculiar to a Christian society which includes a public profession of the name of Christ, and a solemn engagement to walk together in all his commandments and ordinances blameless. It is of the neglect of these important duties that we complain, and would now attempt to suggest a few hints tending to remove the impediments which may lie in the way.

There may be some amongst us, who, while their general conduct is such as entitles them to some respect, are, nevertheless, conscious of *living in some known sin*, and who may, therefore, feel it necessary to decline any immediate connexion with the church of God—Certainly, where this is the case, we do not solicit any association with them; but would rather exhort such persons to confess and forsake their sins, that they may find mercy. The fellowship of Christians is of a holy nature: it is a *fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ:* they have intercourse with God as the moral go-

vernor of the world, through Jesus the Mediator; their object is to carry on the cause of truth and righteousness, to promote the Redeemer's glory, and mutually to labour after a conformity to his will; but it will be impossible to enter into these designs, or contribute to their accomplishment, if sin has dominion over us. There may be much civility, and many expressions of friendship; but where purity of heart and nearness to God are not carefully maintained, there can be none of that Christian tenderness, oneness of spirit, holy freedom, and brotherly affection, in which the communion of saints so much consists. *If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.* Living in sin, therefore, or having sinned and not repented, not only disqualifies us for the fellowship of Christians on earth, but also renders us unmeet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Some, though not living in any known or positive sin, may think, nevertheless, that *a relation to the church of God would lay them under greater obligations to a strict and holy life* than they wish to take upon them, and hence prefer a state of freedom from such restraints. It is allowed that such a connexion does indeed imply the most sacred of all engagements: we covenant to be the Lord's; renouncing all other lords who have had dominion over us, we make mention of his name only. Having named the name of Christ, we are required to depart from all iniquity. Having sworn, we are bound to perform it, that we will keep his righteous judgments. And is it, indeed an object of dread to be bound to Christ and his service, by a solemn surrender of ourselves to him? If there be any amongst us who are of this opinion, we do not immediately invite them to our fellowship; but would rather urge them to inquire, whether their hearts be right in the sight of God? The obligation to universal holiness, though it is directly acknowledged, and in a sense confirmed by an open profession of the name of Christ, yet it does not depend upon any such engagement on our part. Christ's service is not a matter of discretion. Whatever we are

or whatever we profess to be, our obligation is radically the same.

It may be pleaded by others, that *church-fellowship is not essential to salvation*, and that, therefore, we may go to heaven without it. Positive institutions are not, indeed, so essential to salvation, as that it could not in any case be obtained without them; but it does not follow, that, therefore, they are in no case necessary to salvation. We are sure that living in known sin will exclude us from the kingdom of heaven, and, for aught we know, living in the neglect of known duty may do the same. And if it be true, that Christ *becomes the author of eternal salvation to all them who* OBEY *him*, a disobedience to his commands may exclude us from an interest in his salvation, as well as a rejection of his truth. But if it were otherwise, and supposing we might go to heaven without attending to church ordinances, yet what selfishness does it discover! What disregard for the authority of Jesus; what want of love to him and zeal for his glory, to live in the neglect of known duty on the presumption that our own salvation may not be endangered by it! Is it lovely, is it worthy of a child and servant of God thus to act? It might suit a professor whose religion is nothing but selfishness; but let such remember that they have not the love of God in them: *for this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.*

It is to be feared that some are kept from a public profession of Christ by mere *worldly motives.* They have some flattering prospects in life, and their temporal interest would suffer by it. They have relations and friends who feel averse to religion, and would be offended at their openly professing it. The fear of being disinherited, or sustaining loss in their worldly circumstances, induces some persons to conceal their principles, in hope that some future opportunity may be more favourable to their avowal, without subjecting them to temporal inconvenience. But this temporising with religion, and treating it as a subordinate concern, is of serious importance; it implies a practical denial of Christ before men, and will, we fear, expose the party, if he die without repentance for it, to a denial by Christ

before the Father another day. *Lord*, said one, *I will follow thee; but let me first go and bury my father—Let me first go and bid them farewell who are at home*, says another. *Jesus answered, let the dead bury their dead:—follow thou me—No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

The dread of reproach is the occasion of preventing some from following the Lord more fully. A general and loose profession of the Christian name is common enough, and to take up with a worldly religion attaches no stigma to its professor; but to enter into the spirit of the gospel, to come out from amongst the common herd of nominal Christians, to be separate, to follow the Lord *fully*, and to keep his ordinances *as they were delivered*, will subject us to the charge of singularity, and that not only from the grossly immoral, but also from the devout and honourable. But shall we, therefore, be ashamed of Christ before men, and withhold ourselves from the communion of such as are walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless? *If any man be ashamed of me and of my words*, saith our Lord, *of him will I be ashamed before my Father and the holy angels.* Rather let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. He who would please the world, and accommodate his religion to the prevailing taste, undertakes more than he can perform, if he would be the servant of Christ.

> "——————— Faithful found
> Among the faithless, faithful only he:
> Among innumerable false, unmov'd,
> Unshaken, unseduc'd, unterrify'd,
> His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal:
> Nor *number, nor example with him wrought*
> To swerve from truth." MILTON.

Others may be deferring an attendance on divine ordinance still they receive some *particular impressions* to convince them of their duty.—They think it right for those who love Christ to own and follow him, and are willing to be considered as his friends, only they are waiting at the pool for the moving of the waters, in hope of receiving some kind of extraordinary intimations of the divine will, respecting their immediate duty.—Many

persons appear to be looking for something of this sort, and because they do not receive it, conclude it is the mind of God that they should not comply with his ordinances; at least that they should not comply with them at present.—It is allowed, indeed, that impressions are desirable, provided it be truth or duty that is impressed, otherwise they deserve no regard: but let these be as desirable as they may, the want of them can never justify our living in the neglect of known duty. Nor are they at all adapted to show us what is duty, but merely to excite to the performance of what may be proved to be duty without them. If the want of such impressions, or of such a state of mind as we are wishing for in a state of inactivity, would excuse us in the neglect of church fellowship, they would also excuse us in the neglect of other religious duties. But such pleas are highly delusive, and serve only to discover our want of love and zeal in the cause of Christ.

Natural timidity appears to beset some, and keep them back from an open profession of the name of Christ. They feel it desirable to own Christ before men, and are convinced of their obligation so to do; but they are deterred by the publicity of such an engagement, and imagine themselves unable to make a good confession before so many witnesses.—The natural diffidence of some persons may indeed render this very formidable; but it should be remembered that to gain some advantage, or avoid some inconvenience in worldly affairs, such objections are generally overcome: and why should they be deemed insuperable in a matter of far greater importance? Our strength is small indeed, if we faint here. What should we do in times of persecution, when called to confess Christ at the peril of our lives? Our blessed Lord openly avowed our cause in the face of danger: he neither failed, nor was discouraged; but endured the cross, despising the shame. Cold indeed must our hearts be towards him, if we can suffer a few imaginary difficulties to hinder us from owning his righteous cause.

Finally, some are deterred from a compliance with this duty by *a fear lest they should not be proper subjects.* —It is not owing to any dislike to the ways of the Lord, nor indifference to the glory of Christ, that

some amongst us are living in the omission of his ordinances: they regularly attend on the worship of God, manifest good will to the Redeemer's cause, join in social prayer for its prosperity, and are lovers of good men; but fear they are not qualified to fill up a place in the Christian church. The doubts which they entertain of their own personal religion, the supposition that some eminent endowments and a larger degree of Christian experience are necessary to such a connexion, together with the fear of deceiving others, and of being themselves deceived, not only excuse them in their own account from a public profession, but seem to justify and commend them in such a line of conduct. We do not wish to persuade any persons to profess that of which they are not conscious. But if it be indeed a matter of doubt whether they be true Christians, we may be allowed to express our surprise, that they in general discover so little concern about that all-important question. To be *walking in* such *darkness as not to know whither we are going*, is far from being desirable; and, if we have any proper sense of things, it must be very painful. And is it really a matter of doubt, whether you be a believer, or an unbeliever; a friend to Christ, or an enemy; whether from your heart you wish well or ill to his kingdom in the world; whether your soul unites with those who love him, or with those who love him not? Remember there is no neutrality here: *He, that is not with me*, saith Jesus, *is against me; and he, that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.* We are either Christ's friends or his enemies; believers, or unbelievers. We either embrace the gospel or reject it. In other cases, we are not at a loss in judging who or what we love and habitually prefer, nor in determining whose side we are of, or to whose interest we feel attached. If our heart be not with Jesus, by no means let us give him our hand; but if it be, even though we may not enjoy the comforts of religion in so great a degree as some other Christians, it becomes us, nevertheless, to express it by an open profession of his name. If *with the heart we believe unto righteousness*, let us *make confession with the mouth unto salvation.*

Secondly, We proceed to point out THE IMPORTANCE

OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, AS BINDING UPON THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST.

If there were no other considerations to induce us to give up ourselves to a Christian Church, the requirements of our Lord and Saviour ought to be deemed sufficient. Those who pay no practical regard to this duty, generally live in the neglect of the ordinance of Baptism, which Jesus declared was *becoming* him and his followers; and also of the Supper, which he enjoined upon us when taking his leave of the world. The tenderness of this, his dying request, ought to overwhelm all hesitation, and confound the very idea of delay. That a sinner should ask to be remembered of the Saviour is nothing surprising; for if he forget us, we are entirely undone: but that the Lord of glory should ask to be remembered, and remembered as dying for us, is kind and condescending beyond expression. He who can deny such a request must surely be at a loss to prove himself the friend of Christ: *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

The importance which attaches to individual Christians in uniting with churches, must bear some proportion to the importance of the existence of those churches; for, if it be a matter of small account for any one Christian to unite in fellowship, it may be the same for another, and so for all; which is the same thing as supposing it to be a matter of little consequence whether there be any Christian churches in the world. But Christian society seems to be no less necessary for the advancement of the interest of Christ, than human society is for promoting the interest of man. Where do we ordinarily see the work of conversion carried on, except where a Christian church is established, and the word and ordinances are administered? When Christ ascended up on high, *he gave gifts to men;* and wherefore? *That the Lord God might dwell among them.* It is under a social character that Christians are denominated the *house* or *temple* of God, in which he deigns to dwell; where his beauty is beheld, and where we inquire after truth. It is the *body of Christ*, which being fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working of the measure of every

part, maketh increase unto the edifying of itself in love. The natural inference from these representations is, that if we have any regard for the interest of Christ, or any desire for walking in fellowship with him, we should surrender ourselves up to him, and to the fellowship of saints according to his will. If we would find the Shepherd, we must *go forth by the footsteps of the flock.*

We doubt not but that there are godly individuals scattered up and down in the world, who have little or no opportunity of enjoying the fellowship of saints; but it is seldom known that such persons arrive to any considerable eminence in spirituality or usefulness. The eye, or the hand, is singularly useful *in the body;* but if separated, it would be otherwise. The most honourable member cannot say to the least honourable, and still less to the body, *I have no need of thee.* And if those who are lawfully prevented, suffer for the want of Christian fellowship, what may be expected of those who voluntarily neglect it? If the Lord in his providence call us to walk alone, we may hope that he will, at least in some measure, make up the loss of public means by a greater blessing on private ones: but if the former be slighted, he will assuredly withdraw his blessing from the latter.

The neglect of positive institutions under the Old Testament, was sometimes punished with temporal judgments. The Lord sought even to slay his servant Moses, for having omitted to circumcise his son in Midian. And probably it is in allusion to the infliction of calamities for such neglects, that it is said in prophecy, *Whoso will not come up to the feast of tabernacles, upon them shall be no rain.* Under the gospel dispensation, it is God's usual way to punish, not by temporal, but spiritual judgments; and whether the neglect of his ordinances be not generally accompanied with a suspension of spiritual blessings, let experience determine.

The *principle* from which Christian fellowship arises is *love;* and this is of so much importance as to be made by the scriptures a test of personal religion. *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not the brethren, abideth in death.* But if we love the brethren, we shall desire to be one with them in the tenderest ties; to join them in

benevolent labours, to pray and praise with them, to sympathise in their sorrows, and rejoice in their joys; in short, to cast in our lot with them, that whatever good thing the Lord their God may bestow upon them, he may bestow upon us. This is the natural operation of love: and without such a tendency, it cannot be genuine. The renewed heart beats spontaneously after the closest possible union with God and his people. Its language is, *Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me!* David, even in praying for the salvation of his own soul, did not ask for a separate blessing, but for a share in the portion of the people of God. *Remember me O Lord, with the favour which thou bearest to thy people: O visit me with thy salvation: that I may see the good of thy chosen: that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation; that I may glory with thine inheritance!*

The simplicity of gospel ordinances must render an inattention to them inexcusable. Under the former dispensation, the positive institutions of religion were numerous and complicated. The distance, also, which the Israelites, and especially the proselytes from among the Gentiles, had to journey at the times of their solemn assemblies, was very great when compared with ours. God required of them great labour and expense, yet the godly amongst them cheerfully complied. And now that he hath brought the bread of life home to us, raining manna, as it were, around our tents, shall we, therefore, make light of it? If the Lord had bid us do some great thing, should we not have done it? Then how much rather, when he saith, "Wash and be clean?"

One of the most interesting ideas given us of the celestial world is that of a state of glorious *society*. Angels and saints innumerable, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, vie with each other in love and praise, while every creature in heaven and earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, unite in ascribing blessing, and honour, and glory, and power,

unto him who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. And how are we to be fitted for this blessed state, but by associating with the people of God on earth? Thus we become better prepared for glory. Nay, more: It is thus that we actually partake of it.—By cordially uniting with the friends of Jesus in this world, we unite with *the whole family of heaven and earth*, which is but one. Hence it is that believers in the present life are represented as already *come* unto Mount Sion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, to God the judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.

If these sentiments be properly considered and felt, they will not only stimulate those to prompt obedience, who have hitherto neglected the institutions of Christ, but impress us all with a sense of our great advantages, and cause us to rejoice with trembling. We stand on high ground: we walk as upon the borders of heaven: let us watch and pray, lest we be found cleaving to the earth, notwithstanding these distinguished privileges. Nay, it is not impossible that from these heights some of us may fall, like the inhabitants of Capernaum, into perdition!

Finally, It may not be unprofitable for those of us who are ministers and members of churches to inquire whether the neglect of which we complain may not, in part, be owing to something in us? If a minister be uninterested, and consequently uninteresting in his work; if there be but little savour in his spirit, or profit arising from his communications; if the people be haughty, covetous, self-willed, litigious, and conformed to this world; there will be but little encouragement for young Christians to cast in their lot with them. Or, if none of these evils be remarkably apparent, yet if there be a want of holy affection and free conversation, it will not be much otherwise. It is by our having fellowship with God, that godly minds will be induced to have fellowship with us. *We will go with you*, say they, *for we have heard that God is with you!*

N° 14

THE DISCIPLINE

OF THE

PRIMITIVE CHURCHES.

When the apostles, by the preaching of the word, had gathered in any place a sufficient number of individuals to the faith of Christ, it was their uniform practice, for the further promotion of his kingdom in that place, to form them into a Religious Society, or Christian Church. Being thus associated in the name of Christ, divine worship was carried on, Christian ordinances observed, holy discipline maintained, and the word of life, as the light by the golden candlesticks, exhibited. Among them our Lord Jesus Christ, as the high priest of our profession, is represented as walking; observing the good, and applauding it; pointing out the evil, and censuring it; and holding up life and immortality to those who should overcome the temptations of the present state.

Let us suppose him to walk amongst our several churches, and to address us as he addressed the seven churches in Asia. We trust he would find some things to approve; but we are also apprehensive that he would find many things to censure. Let us then look narrowly into the *Discipline* of the primitive churches, and compare ours with it.

By discipline, however, we do not mean to include the whole of the order of a Christian Church; but shall at this time confine our attention to that part of church-government which consists in—A MUTUAL WATCH OVER ONE ANOTHER, AND THE CONDUCT WE ARE DIRECTED TO PURSUE IN CASES OF DISORDER.

A great part of our duty consists in cultivating what is lovely, but this is not the whole of it; we must prune as well as plant, if we would bear much fruit, and be Christ's

disciples. One of the things applauded in the church of Ephesus was that *they could not bear those who were evil.* ty of impos- -t to suppose from hence that no irregulari If uniformity be required in such object of forbearance. difference in judgment or practice shall occasion a sepa- tion, the churches may be always dividing into par- which we are persuaded was never encouraged by the apostles of our Lord, and cannot be justified in trivial or ordinary cases. A contrary practice is expressly taught us in the Epistle to the Romans; (Chap. xiv.) and the cases in which it is to be exercised are there pointed out. An object of forbearance however must be one that may exist without being an occasion of dispute and wrangling in the church: It must *not be to doubtful disputations*, ver. 1. it must also respect things which do not enter into the essence of God's *kingdom*, the leading principles of which are *righteousness*, *peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.* ver. 16, 17. That which does not subvert the gospel of the kingdom, nor set aside the authority of the king, though it be an imperfection, is yet to be borne with. Finally, it must be something which does not *destroy the work of God*, or which is not inconsistent with the progress of vital religion in the church, or in one's own soul. ver. 20. In all such cases we are not to judge one another, but every man's conscience is to be his judge. ver. 23.

In attending to those things which are the proper objects of discipline, our first concern should be to see that all our measures are aimed at *the good of the party and the honour of God.* Both these ends are pointed out in the case of the Corinthian offender. All was to be done *that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord*, and to *clear themselves* as a church from being partakers of his sin. If these ends be kept in view they will preserve us from much error; particularly, from the two great evils into which churches are in danger of falling, false lenity, and unchristian severity. There is often a party found in a community, who, under the name of tenderness, are for neglecting all wholesome discipline; or if this cannot be accomplished, for delaying it to the utmost. Such persons are commonly the advocates for disorderly walkers, especially if they be their particular friends or relations. Their language is, "He

that is without sin, let him cast the first stone. My brother hath fallen to-day, and I may fall to-morrow." This spirit, though it exists only in individuals, provided they be persons of any weight or influence, is frequently known to impede the due execution of the laws of Christ; and if it pervade the community, it will soon reduce it to the lowest state of degeneracy. Such for a time was the spirit of the Corinthians; but when brought to a proper sense of things, what carefulness it wrought in them, yea what clearing of themselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what vehement desire, yea what zeal, yea what revenge. In opposing the extreme of false tenderness, others are in danger of falling into unfeeling severity. This spirit will make the worst of every thing, and lead men to convert the censures of the church into weapons of private revenge. Persons of this description know not of what manner of spirit they are. They lose sight of the good of the offender. It is not love that operates in them; for love worketh no evil. The true medium between these extremes is a union of *mercy and truth*. Genuine mercy is combined with faithfulness, and genuine faithfulness with mercy; and this is the only spirit that is likely to *purge iniquity*. (Prov. xvi. 6.) Connivance will produce indifference; and undue severity will arm the offender with prejudice, and so harden him in sin: but the love of God and of our brother's soul are adapted to answer every good end. If we love God, like Levi, we shall know no man after the flesh, nor acknowledge our nearest kindred; but shall observe his word and keep his covenant. And if we love the soul of our brother, we shall say, "He is fallen to-day, and I will reprove him for his good: I may fall to-morrow, and then let him deal the same with me." Love is the grand secret of church discipline, and will do more than all other things put together, towards insuring success.

In the exercise of discipline it is necessary to distinguish between faults which are the consequences of sudden temptation, and such as are the result of premeditation and habit. The former requires a compassionate treatment; the latter a greater portion of severity. The sin of Peter in denying his Lord was great, and if noticed by the enemies of Christ, might bring great reproach upon his cause; yet, compared with the sin of Solomon it was little. He first

gave way to licentiousness; then to idolatry, and on finding that God, as a punishment for his sin, had given ten tribes to Jeroboam, he sought to kill him. Cases like this are immediately dangerous, and require a prompt and decided treatment, and in which hesitating tenderness would be the height of cruelty. "Of some have compassion, making a difference; others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." (Jude 22, 23. See also Gal. vi. 1.)

In all our admonitions regard should be had to the age and character of the party. An elder, as well as other men, may be in fault, and a fault that may require to be noticed; but let him be told of it in a tender and respectful manner. While you expostulate with younger men on a footing of equality, pay a deference to age and office. "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren." (1 Tim. v. 1.)

In the due execution of Christian discipline there are many things to be done by the members of churches *individually;* and it is upon the proper discharge of these duties that much of the peace and purity of a church depends. If we be faithful to one another there will be but few occasions for public censure. Various improprieties of conduct, neglects of duty, and declensions in the power of godliness, are the proper subjects of pastoral admonition. It is one essential branch of this office to "rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering." (2 Tim. iv. 2.) Nor is this work confined to pastors: Christians are directed to admonish one another. (Rom. xv. 14.) Indeed there are things which a wise and affectionate people will be concerned to take upon themselves, lest a prejudice should be contracted against the ministry, which may prevent its good effects. This is peculiarly necessary in the settling of differences, in which whole families may be interested, and in which it is extremely difficult to avoid the suspicion of partiality.

In all cases of *personal offence*, the rule laid down by our Lord, in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, ought to be attended to; and no such offence ought to be admitted before a church till the precept of Christ has been first complied with by the party or parties concerned.

In many cases where faults are *not* committed immedi-

ately against us, but which are unknown except to a few individuals, love will lead us to endeavour to reclaim the party if possible, without any further exposure. A *just man will not be willing*, unnecessarily to make his brother *a public example*. The scriptures give peculiar encouragement to these personal and private attempts. "If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." (James v. 19, 20.)

In cases of *evil* report, where things are said of a brother, in our hearing, which, if true, must affect his character, and the purity of the church, it cannot be right to go on to report it. Love will not lead to this. Many reports we know are unfounded; or if true in the main, they may have been aggravated; or there may be circumstances attending the case, which if fully understood would make things appear very different from the manner in which they have been represented. Now it is almost impossible that any one but the party himself should be acquainted with all these circumstances, or able to give a full account of them. No time therefore should be lost, ere we enquire at the hand of our brother, or if on any consideration we feel that to be unsuitable, it would be proper to apply to an officer of the church, who may conduct it with greater propriety.

There are cases of a more public nature still, in which much of the peace and happiness of a church depends upon the conduct of its members in their individual capacity. The charge given by the apostle to the Romans, (chap. xvi. 17, 18.) though applicable to a church, yet seems to be rather addressed to the individuals who compose it "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." The characters to be *avoided* appear to be persons whose object it is to set up a party in the church, of which they may be the heads or leaders; a kind of religious demagogues. Such men are found, at one time or other, in most societies; and in some cases the peace of the churches has been invaded by strangers, who are not of their own com-

munity. Let the "brethren" have their eye upon such men. "Mark them:" trace their conduct, and you will soon discover their motives. Stand aloof from them, and "avoid" striking in with their dividing measures. In case of their being members, the church, collectively considered, ought, no doubt, to put away from amongst them such wicked persons: but as every collective body is composed of individuals, if those individuals suffer themselves to be drawn away, the church is necessarily thrown into confusion, and rendered incapable of a prompt, unanimous, and decided conduct. Let members of churches, therefore, beware how they listen to the insinuations of those who would entice them to join their party. Men of this stamp are described by the apostle, and therefore may be known, particularly by three things—First, by their doctrine; "it is contrary to that which has been learned of Christ." Secondly, by their selfish pursuits: "they serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies." Thirdly, by their insinuating whining pretences of affectionate regard towards their partizans: "by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple."

To this may be added, there are duties on individuals in their behaviour towards persons who lie under the censure of the Church. If they still continue in a state of impenitence, persist in their sin, or be irreconciled to the church's proceedings with them, it is of the utmost consequence that every member should act a uniform part towards them. We may, it is true, continue our ordinary and necessary intercourse with them as men, in the concerns of this life: but there must be no familiarity, no social interchange, no visitings to them, nor receiving visits from them, nothing in short that is expressive of connivance at their conduct.—"If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, we must not keep company with such an one, no not to eat." (1 Cor. v. 11.) If individual members act contrary to this rule, and carry it freely towards an offender, as if nothing had taken place, it will render the censure of the church of none effect. Those persons also who behave in this manner will be considered by the party as his friends, and others who stand aloof as his enemies, or at least as being unreasonably severe:

which will work confusion, and render void the best and most wholesome discipline. We must act in concert, or we may as well do nothing. Members who violate this rule are partakers of other men's sins, and deserve the rebukes of the church, for counteracting its measures.

With respect to those things which fall under the cognizance of a church in its collective capacity, we earnestly recommend in general, that every thing be done not only with a view to the honour of God, and the good of the party, as before observed, but with a special regard to the revealed will of Christ. That some kind of order be preserved, in every community, is necessary to its existence. Decency, reputation, and even worldly policy, will induce us to take some notice of gross immoralities: but this is not Christian discipline: nor will it be productive of its salutary effects. In the choice of officers, few if any churches would elect a profligate: but if opulence be allowed to supply the place of spirituality, or ambitious or litigious characters be preferred on the principle of expediency, as a means of keeping them in better humour, is it not carnal? So, in matters of discipline, few churches would suffer a grossly immoral or litigious character to continue amongst them unnoticed: but if, instead of a calm, impartial and decided procedure, we enter into pusillanimous compromises with the offender, consenting that he should withdraw of his own accord; if the crimes of rich men be either entirely overlooked, or but slightly touched, lest the cause should suffer from their being offended; or if the misconduct of poor men be disregarded, on the ground of their being persons of little or no account, are we not carnal, and walk as men? Brethren! Are there any such things amongst us? Search and consider. Such things ought not to be. The private withdrawment of an individual, if it be without good reason, may justify a church in admonishing him, and, if he cannot be reclaimed, in excluding him: but it cannot of itself dissolve the relation. Till such exclusion has taken place he is a member, and his conduct affects their reputation as much as that of any other member. With regard to a neglect of discipline lest it should injure the *cause*, what cause must that be which requires to be thus supported? Be it our concern to obey the laws of Christ, and leave him to support his own cause. If it sink by fulfilling

his commandments, let it sink. He will not censure us for not supporting the ark with unhallowed hands. And if it be criminal to fear the rich, it cannot be less so to despise the poor. Let brotherly love abound towards both. Do all things without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

We cannot enumerate all the particular cases which fall under the cognizance of a Christian church, but shall mention a few which are recorded in the Scriptures for our imitation.

A DEPARTURE FROM THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL, OR ANY OF ITS LEADING DOCTRINES, is an object of Christian discipline. "I would they were even cut off that trouble you—I have a few things against thee, because thou hast them that hold the doctrine of Balaam—so hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.—A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." (Gal. v. 12. Rev. ii. 14, 15. Tit. iii. 10.)

It is worthy of notice, that the only passage in the New Testament wherein heresy is introduced as *an object of discipline*, makes no mention of any thing as composing it but *what relates to the principles of the party*. It may be supposed that those who were accounted heretics by the apostles were as impure in their lives as they were antichristian in their doctrine, and that they were commonly disturbers of the peace and unity of the churches: but however this might be, neither of these evils are alleged as the reason for which the heretic was to be *rejected*. All that is mentioned is this: He is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

He is "subverted;" that is, his professed faith in the gospel is in effect overturned, or rendered void; consequently he requires to be treated as an unbeliever. He is "condemned of himself;" that is, the gospel being a consistent whole, he who rejects some of its leading principles, while he professes to retain others, is certain to fall into self-contradiction; which, if clearly pointed out in a "first and second admonition," and he still persist, he will be compelled obstinately to shut his eyes against the light, and thus, "sin" against the dictates of his own conscience.

It has been asked by persons who disapprove of all church proceedings on account of a difference in religious principles, Who is to judge what is heresy? We answer, Those who are to judge what is immorality in dealing with loose characters. To suppose it impossible to judge what heresy is, or to deny that the power of so deciding rests in a Christian church, is to charge the apostolic precept with impertinence. It is true, the judgment of a church may be erroneous as well as that of an individual; and it becomes them in their decisions to consider that they will all be revised at the great day: but the same may be said of all human judgment, civil or judicial, to which no one is so void of reason, as on this account to object.

In CASES OF NOTORIOUS AND COMPLICATED WICKEDNESS, it appears, that in the primitive churches, immediate exclusion was the consequence. In the case of the incestuous Corinthian, there are no directions given for his being admonished, and excluded only in case of his being incorrigibly impenitent. The apostle determined what should be done—*In the name of the Lord Jesus when ye are gathered together to deliver such a one unto Satan.* We cannot but consider it as an error in the discipline of some churches where persons have been detected of gross and aggravated wickedness, that their exclusion has been suspended, and in many cases omitted, on the ground of their professed repentance. While the evil was a secret it was persisted in, but when exposed by a public detection, then repentance is brought forward, as it were in arrest of judgment. But can that repentance be genuine which is pleaded for the purpose of warding off the censures of a Christian church? We are persuaded it cannot. The eye of a true penitent will be fixed on the greatness of his sin, and he will be the last to discern or talk of his repentance for it. So far from pleading it, in order to evade censure, he will censure himself, and desire nothing more than that testimony may be borne against his conduct for the honour of Christ.

But allowing that repentance in such cases is sincere, still it is not of such account as to set aside the necessity of exclusion. The end to be answered by this measure is not merely the good of the party, but the "clearing" of a Christian church from the very appearance of conniving at

immorality; and which cannot be accomplished by repentance only. Though *Miriam* might be truly sorry for her sin in having spoken against Moses, and though she might be healed of her leprosy; yet *the Lord said unto Moses, if her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut out from the camp seven days; and after that let her be received in again.* (Numb. xii. 14.)

We do not suppose, however, that *every* notorious fault requires immediate exclusion. The general rule given is—that NOTORIOUS EVILS SHOULD MEET WITH A PUBLIC REBUKE. *Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear.* (1 Tim. v. 20.) But this proceeding does not appear to amount to exclusion; it is rather of the nature of a *censure* or *reprimand*, accompanying an admonition. To us it appears that the circumstances attending a sin, ought to determine whether it require immediate exclusion or not. If these be highly aggravating; if there appear to have been premeditation, intention, and perseverance in the crime, *put away from amongst yourselves that wicked person:* but if circumstances extenuate, rather than heighten the evil, solemn admonition, accompanied with rebuke, ought to suffice, and no exclusion to follow but in case of incorrigible impenitence.

There are also faults which do not come under the denomination of notorious sins, wherein directions are given for recovering the offenders WITHOUT ANY MENTION BEING MADE OF EXCLUSION, EITHER IMMEDIATE OR ULTIMATE. There is perhaps in all the churches a description of men whose characters are far from being uniformly circumspect, and yet not sufficiently irregular to warrant their being separated from communion. They are disorderly walkers; busy-bodies in other men's matters, while negligent of their own; in a word, unamiable characters. Now those that are such we are directed to exhort, and charge that they conduct themselves as becometh Christians. If after this they continue disorderly, observe a degree of distance in your conduct towards them; withdraw your intimacy; let them feel the frowns of their brethren: yet be not wholly reserved, but occasionally explain to them the reasons of your conduct, affectionately admonishing them at the same time to repentance and amendment of life

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.—For we hear that there are some who walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies. Now them that are such we command, and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. And if any obey not our word by this epistle note that man, and have no company with him that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." (2 Thess. iii. 6—15.) If churches were to consult only their own reputation, they would often discard such persons at an early period: but where there is reason to hope that the heart is right in the main, great forbearance must be exercised, and long perseverance in endeavouring to recover. How many imperfections were discovered in the conduct of the twelve apostles, while their Lord was with them, and what an example of forbearance has he left us! One character reclaimed is of greater account and more to the honour of a Christian church, than many discarded.

Finally, a watchful eye upon the state of the church, and of particular members, with a seasonable interposition, may do more towards the preservation of good order than all other things put together. Discourage whisperings, backbitings, and jealousies. Frown on tale bearers, and give no ear to their tales. Nip contentions in the bud. Adjust differences in civil matters among yourselves. Bring together at an early period those in whom misconception and distrust have begun to operate, ere ill opinion ripen into settled dislike. By a frank and timely explanation in the presence of a common friend, *that* may be healed in an hour, which, if permitted to proceed, a series of years cannot eradicate. Be affectionately free with one another. Give tender and faithful hints where it appears to you that one of your brethren is in danger of being drawn aside from the principles or spirit of the gospel. Let all be given, from their first entering into connexion with you, to expect them. If any one take offence at such treatment, give him to understand that he who cannot endure a caution or a reproof, is unfit for Christian society; and is in the utmost danger of falling into mischief.

The free circulation of the blood, and the proper discharge of all the animal functions, are not more necessary to the health of the body, than good discipline is to the prosperity of a community.

If it were duly considered how much the general interests of religion, and even the salvation of men, may be affected by the purity and harmony of Christian churches, we should tremble at the idea of their being interrupted by us. The planting of a church in a neighborhood where the gospel is preached, and the ordinances of Christ administered in their purity, is a great blessing. It is a temple reared for God, in which he designs to record his name, to meet with his humble worshippers, and to bless them. We have seen churches of this description, in the midst of a career of spiritual prosperity, edifying one another in love, and gathering souls to the Redeemer's standard, all in a little time, blasted and ruined by some unhappy event that has thrown them into disorder. One of the members, it may be, has acted unworthily—he is reproved—his relations or particular acquaintances take on his side—discipline is interrupted—the church is divided into parties—hard things are said on both sides—the bond of love is broken—tender minds are grieved, and retire—worship is but thinly attended, and the enjoyment of it is vanished—God's friends mourn in secret, and his enemies triumph, saying, aha! so would we have it! Truly it is a serious thing to occasion the ruin of a Church of Christ! *If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy!*

A. Fuller.

Humility makes a man peaceable among brethren, fruitful in well-doing, cheerful in suffering, and constant in holy walking. Humility fits us for the highest services we owe to Christ, and yet will not neglect the lowest service to the meanest saint. Humility can feed upon the meanest dish, and yet it is maintained by the choicest delicacies, as God, Christ, and glory. Humility will make a man bless him that curses him, and pray for those that persecute him. A humble heart is a habitation for God, a scholar for Christ, a companion of angels, a preserver of grace, and meet for glory. Humility is the nurse of our graces, preserver of our mercies, and the great promoter of holy duties

14. Brooks.

No. 91.

THE DUTIES OF

CHURCH MEMBERS

TOWARDS EACH OTHER.

BY J. A. JAMES.

I. The first, and that which indeed seems to include every other, is LOVE.

The stress which is laid on this in the Word of God, both as it respects the manner in which it is stated, and the frequency with which it is enjoined, sufficiently provee its vast importance in the Christian temper, and its powerful influence on the communion of believers. It is enforced by our Lord as the identifying law of his kingdom. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." John xv. 12. By this we learn that the subjects of Christ are to be known and distinguished amongst men, by their mutual affection. This injunction is denominated *the new commandment* of the Christian economy; not that love was no duty before the coming of Christ; but it is now placed more prominently amongst the duties of believers; is urged on fresh grounds, enforced by a more perfect example, and constrained by stronger motives. The dispensation of Jesus Christ is a system of most wonderful, most mysterious grace; it is the manifestation, commendation, and perfection of divine love. It originated in the love of the Father, and is accomplished by the love of the Son. Jesus Christ was an incarnation of love in our world. He was love living, breathing, speaking, acting, amongst men. His birth was the nativity of love, his sermons the words of love, his miracles the wonders of love, his tears the meltings of love, his crucifixion the agonies of love, his resurrection the triumph of love. Hence it was natural, that love should be the cardinal virtue in the character of his saints, and that it should be the law which regulates their conduct towards each other.

And it is worthy of remark, that he has made his love to us, not only the motive, but the pattern of our love to each other. This is my commandment, that ye love one another *as* I have loved you, John xv. 17. Let us for our instruction dwell upon the properties of his love, that we may know what should be the characteristics of our own. *His* was *real* and *great* affection, and not a mere nominal one: so let us love not in word and in tongue only, but also in deed and in truth. *His* was *free* and *disinterested*, without any regard to our deserts: so ours should be independent of any regard to our own advantage. *His* was fruitful unto tears, and agonies, and blood, and death: so should ours in every thing that can establish the comfort of each other. *His* was a love of *forbearance* and *forgiveness;* so should ours be. *His* was purely a *spiritual* flame; not loving them as rational creatures merely, but as objects of divine affection, and subjects of divine likeness. *His* was *unchangeable* notwithstanding our weaknesses and unkindnesses: thus we are bound to love one another, and continue unalterable in our affection to each other, in opposition to all those little infirmities of temper and conduct which we daily discover in our fellow Christians.

The Apostles echoed the language of their Master, and continually enjoined the churches which they had planted, to love one another, and to let brotherly love abound and increase. It is a grace so important that, like holiness, no measure of it is sufficient to satisfy the requirement of the Word of God. It is the basis, and cement, and beauty of the Christian union. The church where it is wanting, whatever may be the number or gifts of its members, is nothing better than a heap of stones, which, however polished, want the coherence and similitude of a palace.

In the best and purest ages of the church, this virtue shone so brightly in the character of its members, was so conspicuous in all their conduct, was expressed in actions so replete with noble, disinterested, and heroic affection, as to become a proverb with surrounding pagans, and call forth the well known exclamation, "See how these Christians love one another!" A finer eulo-

gium was never pronounced on the Christian church; a more valuable tribute was never deposited on the altar of Christianity. Alas! that it should so soon have ceased to be just, and that the church as it grew older should have lost its loveliness by losing its love.

But it will be necessary to point out the manner in which brotherly love wherever it exists will operate.

1. *In a peculiar complacency in our fellow members, viewed as the objects of divine love.*

Complacency is the very essence of love; and the ground of all proper complacency in the saints, is their relation and likeness to God. We should feel peculiar delight in each other as fellow heirs of the grace of God; partakers of like precious faith, and joint sharers of the common salvation. We must be dear to each other as the objects of the Father's mercy, of the Son's dying grace, and of the Spirit's sanctifying influence. The love of Christians is of a very sacred nature, and is quite peculiar. It is not the love of consanguinity, or friendship, or interest, or general esteem; but it is an affection cherished for Christ's sake. They may see many things in each other to admire, such as an amiable temper, public spirit, tender sympathy; but Christian love does not rest on these things, although they may increase it, but on the ground of a common relationship to Christ. On *this account* they are to take peculiar delight in each other, as being one in Christ. "These," should a believer exclaim, as he looks on the church, "are the objects of the Redeemer's living and dying love, whom he regards with complacency; and out of affection to him, I feel an inexpressible delight in them. I love to associate with them, to talk with them, to look upon them, because they are Christ's."

2. Love to our brethren will lead us *to bear one another's burthens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.* Gal. vi. 2.

When we see them oppressed with a weight of anxious care, instead of carrying ourselves with cold indifference and unfeeling distance towards them, we should cherish a tender solicitude to know and relieve their anxieties. How touching would such a salutation as the following be, from one Christian to another: "Brother, I have observed, with considerable pain, that

your countenance has been covered with gloom, as if you were sinking under some inward solicitude. I would not be unpleasantly officious, nor wish to obtrude myself upon your attention, farther than is agreeable; but I offer you the expressions of Christian sympathy, and the assistance of Christian counsel. Can I in any way assist to mitigate your care, and restore your tranquillity?" At such sounds, the loaded heart would feel as if half its load were gone. It may be, the kind inquirer, could yield no effectual relief, but there is balm in his sympathy. The indifference of some professing Christians to the burthens of their brethren is shocking; they would see them crushed to the very earth with cares and sorrows, and never make one kind inquiry into their situation, nor lend a helping hand to lift them from the dust. Love requires that we should take the deepest interest in each other's case, that we should patiently listen to the tale of wo which a brother brings us, that we should mingle our tears with his, that we should offer him our advice, that we should suggest to him the consolations of the gospel; in short, we should let him see that his troubles reach not only our ear, but our heart. Sympathy is one of the finest, the most natural, the most easy expressions of love.

3. Love requires that *we should visit our brethren in their affliction.*

"I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came unto me;—for as much as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me;" such is the language of Jesus Christ to his people, by which he teaches us how important and incumbent a duty it is for church members to visit each other in their afflictions. Probably there is no duty more neglected than this. Christians often lie on beds of sickness for weeks and months successively, without seeing a fellow member cross the threshold of their chamber door. How often have I been shocked, when upon inquiring of the sufferer whether such and such an individual residing in their neighbourhood had been to visit them, it had been said in reply, "Oh! no Sir, I have now been stretched on this bed for days and weeks. My pain and weakness have been so great, that I have scarcely been able to col-

lect my thoughts for meditation and prayer. The sight of a dear Christian friend would indeed have relieved the dull monotony of this gloomy scene, and the voice of piety would have been as music to blunt my sense of pain, and lull my troubled heart to short repose; but such a sight and such a sound have been denied me. No friend has been near me, and it has aggravated sorrows, already heavy, to be thus neglected and forgotten by a church, which I joined with the hope of finding amongst them the comfort of sympathy. But alas! alas! I find them too much occupied with the things seen and temporal, to think of a suffering brother, to whom wearisome nights and months of vanity are appointed." How could I help exclaiming, "O, Christian love, bright image of the Saviour's heart! whither hast thou fled, that thou so rarely visitest the church on earth, to shed thine influence, and manifest thy beauties there?" There have been ages of Christianity, so historians inform us, in which brotherly love prevailed amongst Christians to such a degree, that, fearless of the infection diffused by the most malignant and contagious disorders, they have ventured to the bed side of their brethren expiring in the last stages of the plague, to administer the consolations of a hope full of immortality. This *was* love; love stronger than death, and which many waters could not quench. It was no doubt imprudent, but it was heroic, and circulated far and wide the praises of that dear name which was the secret of the wonder.

How many are there, now bearing the Christian name, who scarcely ever yet paid one visit to the bed side of a suffering brother. Shame and disgrace upon such professors!!! Let *them* not expect to hear the Saviour say, "I was sick, and *ye* visited me."

That this branch of Christian love may be performed with greater diligence, it would be a good plan for the pastor, at every church meeting, to mention the names of the afflicted members, and stir up the brethren to visit them. It would be particularly desirable for Christians to go to the scene of suffering on a Sabbath day, and read the Bible and sermons to the afflicted, at that time, as they are then peculiarly apt to feel their sorrows, in conse-

quence of being cut off from the enjoyments of public worship.

4. "*Pray one for another,*" James v. 16.

Not only *with* but *for* one another. A Christian should take the interests of his brethren into the closet. Private devotion is not to be selfish devotion. It would much increase our affection did we devote more of our private prayers to each other's welfare.

5. *Pecuniary relief should be administered to those who need it.*

"Distributing to the necessities of the saints," Rom. xii. 13, is mentioned amongst the incumbent duties of professing Christians. How just, how forcible is the interrogation of the Apostle, 1 John iii. 17, "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Nothing can be more absurd, than those pretensions to love, which are not supported by exertions to relieve the wants of the object beloved. It must be a singular affection which is destitute of mercy. So powerfully did this holy passion operate in the first ages of the church, that many rich Christians sold their estates, and shared their affluence with the poor. What rendered this act the more remarkable is, that it was purely voluntary. It is not *our duty* any more than it was theirs, to go this length; still, however, it is evident both from general principles as well as from particular precepts, that we are under obligation to make some provision for the comfort of the poor. This duty must be left in the statement of general terms, as it is impossible to define its precise limits. It does not appear to me to be at all incumbent to make regular periodical distributions to the poor, whether in circumstances of distress or not. Some churches have a registered list of pensioners, who come as regularly for their pay, as if they were hired servants. If they are old, infirm, or unprovided for, this is very well; but for those to receive relief, who are getting a comfortable subsistence by their labour, is an abuse of the charity of the church. The money collected at the Lord's supper, should be reserved for times of sickness and peculiar necessity.

It should be recollected, also, that *public* contributions do not release the members from the exercise of *private liberality*. The shilling a month which is given at the Lord's supper, seems in the opinion of many, to discharge them from all further obligation to provide for the comfort of their poorer brethren, and to be a sort of composition for the full exercise of religious charity. This is a great mistake; it ought rather to be considered as a mere earnest, or pledge of all that more effective and abundant liberality which they should exercise in secret. Every Christian who is indulged with a considerable share of the bounties of providence ought to consider the poorer members of the church, who may happen to live in his neighbourhood, as the objects of his peculiar care, interest, and relief.

6. *Forbearance is a great part of love.*

"Forbearing one another in love." Eph. iv. 2. In a Christian church, especially where it is of considerable magnitude, we must expect to find a very great diversity of character. There are all the gradations of intellect, and all the varieties of temper. In such cases great forbearance is absolutely essential to the preservation of harmony and peace. The strong must bear with the infirmities of the weak. Christians of great attainments in knowledge should not in their hearts despise, nor in their conduct ridicule the feeble conceptions of those who are babes in Christ; but most meekly correct their errors, and most kindly instruct their ignorance. This is love. In very many persons there will unhappily be found some things, which although they by no means affect the reality and sincerity of their religion, considerably diminish its lustre, and have a tendency, without the caution of love, to disturb our communion with them. Some have a forward and obtrusive manner; others are talkative; others indulge a complaining, whining, begging disposition; others are abrupt, almost to rudeness, in their address. These, and many more, are the spots of God's children—with which we are sometimes so much displeased, as to feel an alienation of heart from the subjects of them, although we have no doubt of their real piety. Now here is room for the exercise of love. These are the cases in which

we are to employ that charity which covereth all things. Are we to love only amiable Christians? Perhaps, after all, in the substantial parts of religion, these rough characters far excel others, whom courtesy and amiableness have carried to the highest degree of polish. I do not say we are to love these individuals *for* their peculiarities, but *in spite* of them. Not on their own account, but for Christ's sake, to whom they belong. And what can be a greater proof of our affection for him, than to love an unlovely individual on his account?

If you had the picture of a valued friend, would you withdraw from it your affection, and throw it away, because there was a spot upon the canvass, which in some degree disfigured the painting? No: you would say, it is a likeness of my friend still, and I love it, notwithstanding its imperfection. The believer is a picture of your best friend; and will you discard him, neglect him, because there is a speck upon the painting?

7. *Love should induce us to watch over one another.*

Am I my brother's keeper? was an inquiry suitable enough in the lips of a murderer, but most unsuitable and inconsistent from a Christian. We are brought into fellowship for the very purpose of being keepers of each other. We are to watch over our brethren, and admonish and reprove them as circumstances may require. I do not mean that church members should pry into each other's secrets, or be busy bodies in other men's matters, for that is forbidden by God and abominable in the sight of man. 1 Thess. iii. 11. 1 Pet. iv. 15. Much less are they to assume authority over each other, and act the part of proud and tyrannical inquisitors. But still we are to "exhort one another daily, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." We are not to suffer sin to be committed, or duty to be omitted by a brother, without affectionately admonishing him. What can be more incumbent, more obligatory, than this? Can we indeed love any one, and at the same time see him do that which we know will injure him, without entreating him to desist? "Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." Gal. vi. 1.

Let us then take heed against that Cain-like spirit which is too prevalent in our churches, and which leads

many to act as if their fellow members were no more to them than the stranger at the ends of the earth. Striking are the words of God to the Jews, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke him, and not suffer sin upon him." Lev. xix. 17. Not to rebuke him then when he sins, is instead of loving him to hate him. This neglect is what the apostle means by being partakers of other men's sins. The admonition to "warn the unruly," 1 Thess. v. 14. was delivered not merely to ministers, but to private Christians.

I know no duty more neglected than this. It is one of the most prevalent defects of Christians. Many a backslider would have been prevented from going far astray, if in the very first stages of his declension some brother, who had observed his critical state, had faithfully and affectionately warned and admonished him. What shame, and anguish, and disgrace, would the offender himself have been spared, and what dishonour and scandal would have been averted from the church by this one act of faithful love!

I am aware it is a difficult and self-denying duty; but that cannot excuse its neglect. Love will enable us to perform it, and the neglect of it violates the law of Christ.

II. Church members should cultivate PEACE and HARMONY one with another.

"Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephes. iv. 3. Be of one mind, live in peace. 2 Cor. iii. 11. Follow after the things which make for peace. Rom. xiv. 19." It is quite needless to expatiate on the value and importance of peace. What society can exist without it? I shall therefore proceed to state what things are necessary for the attainment of this end.

1. *Members should be subject one to another in humility.*

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you, be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." 1 Pet. v. 5. Now from hence we learn, that some kind of mutual subjection ought to be established in every Christian church. This of course does not mean, that some members are to make an entire surrender of their opinions and feelings to others, so far as never to oppose them, and always

to be guided by them. It is not the subjection of an inferior to a superior, but of equals to one another; not that which is extorted by authority, but voluntarily conceded by affection; not yielded as matter of right, but given for the sake of peace: in short, it is the mutual subjection of love and humility. Young and inexperienced persons ought to be subject to the aged; for what can be more indecorous than to see a stripling standing up at a church meeting, and with confidence and flippancy, opposing his views to those of a disciple old enough to be his grandfather? Youth loses its loveliness when it loses its modesty. They should hearken with deference and most reverential attention to the opinion of the aged. Nor does the obligation rest here; it extends to those who are equal in age and rank: Church members should be subject to each other; they should not be determined at all events to have their own way, but should go as far as principle will let them, in giving up their own views and predilections to the rest. Every one should hearken with respectful attention to the opinions of others, and be willing to sacrifice his own. The contention ought not to be for rule, but for subjection. Instead of haughtily exclaiming, "I have as much right to have my way as any one else," we should say, "I have an opinion, and will mildly and respectfully state it; yet I will not force it upon the church, but give way to the superior wisdom of others, if I am opposed." There should be in every member a supposition that others may see as clearly, probably more so, than himself.

The democratic principle in our system of church government must not be stretched too far. The idea of equal rights is soon abused and converted into the means of turbulence and faction. Liberty, fraternity, and equality, are words which both in church and state have often become the signals in the mouths of some, for the lawless invasion of the rights of others. It has been strangely forgotten, that no man in social life has a right to please only himself; his will is, or ought to be, the good of the whole. And that individual violates at once the social compact, whether in ecclesiastical or civil society, who pertinaciously and selfishly exclaims,

"I *will* have *my* way." Such a declaration constitutes him a rebel against the community. Yet alas! how much of this rebellion is to be found not only in the world, but in the church; and what havoc and desolation has it occasioned. Unfortunately for the peace of our societies, it is sometimes disguised, by the deceitfulness of the human heart, under the cloak of zeal for the general good. Church members should enter into these sentiments, and thus comply with the apostolic admonitions, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves." Phil. ii. 3. "In honour preferring one another." Rom. xii. 10.

2. To the preservation of peace, *a right treatment of offences is essentially necessary.*

We should ever be cautious not to GIVE *offence.*

Some persons are rude, dogmatical, or indiscreet; they never consult the feelings of those around them, and are equally careless whom they please and whom they offend. They say and do just what their feelings prompt, without the least regard to the consequences of their words and actions. They act like an individual who because it pleases him, discharges a loaded musket in a crowded street, where some are almost sure to be wounded. This is not the charity which is kind, courteous, and civil. A Christian should be ever afraid of giving offence; he should be anxious not to injure the wing of an insect, much more the mind of a brother. The peace of his brethren should even be more sacred than his own. It should be his fixed determination never, if possible, to occasion a moment's pain. For this purpose he should be discreet, and mild, and courteous in all his language, weighing the import of words before he utters them, and calculating the consequence of actions before he performs them. He should remember that he is moving in a crowd, and be careful not to trample on, or jostle his neighbours.

We should all be backward to RECEIVE *offence.*

Quarrels often begin for want of the caution I have just stated, and are then continued for want of the backwardness I am now enforcing. An observance of these two principles would keep the world in peace. There are some people whose passions are like tow, kindled

into a blaze in a moment by the least spark which has been designedly or accidentally thrown upon it. A word, a look, is in some cases quite enough to be considered a very serious injury. It is no uncommon thing for such persons to excuse themselves on the ground that their feelings are so delicately sensible that they are offended by the least touch. This is an humiliating confession, for it is acknowledging that instead of being like the cedar of Lebanon, or the oak of the forest which laughs at the tempest, and is unmoved by the boar of the wood, they resemble the sensitive plant, a little squeamish shrub, which trembles before the breeze, and shrivels and contracts beneath the pressure of an insect. Delicate feelings !! In plain English, this means that they are petulant and irascible. I would have a text of Scripture written upon a label, and tied upon the forehead of such persons; and it should be this—"Beware of dogs."

We should never suffer ourselves to be offended, until, at least, we are sure that offence was *intended;* and this is really not so often as we are apt to conclude. Had we but patience to wait, or humility to inquire, we should find that many things were done by mistake, which we are prone to attribute to design. How often do we violate that charity which thinketh no evil, and which imperatively demands of us to attribute a good motive to another's conduct, except a bad one is proved. Let us then deliberately determine, that, by God's grace, we will not be easily offended. If such a resolution were generally made and kept, offences would cease. Let us first ascertain whether offence was intended, before we suffer the least emotion of anger to be indulged; and even then, when we have proved that the offence was not committed by accident, let us next ask ourselves whether it is necessary to notice it. What wise man will think it worth while, when an insect has stung him, to pursue and punish the aggressor?

When we have received an injury which is too serious to be passed over unnoticed, and requires explanation in order to our future pleasant intercourse with the individual who inflicts it, *we should neither brood over it in silence, nor communicate it to a third person, but go directly to the offender himself, and state to him in private*

our views of his conduct. This is most clearly enjoined by our divine Lord—"Moreover, if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." Matt. xviii. 15. Many persons lock up the injury in their own bosom; and instead of going to their offending brother, dwell upon his conduct in silence, until their imagination has added to it every possible aggravation, and their minds have come to the conclusion to separate themselves for ever from his society. From that hour, they neither speak to him, nor think well of him; but consider and treat him as an alien from their hearts. This is not *religion.* Our duty is to go, and to go as speedily as possible, to the offender. The longer we delay, the more serious will the offence appear in our eyes, and the more difficult will it be to persuade ourselves to obtain the interview.

Others, when they have received an offence, *set off to some friend*, perhaps to more than one, to lodge their complaint, and tell how they have been treated. The report of the injury spreads further and wider, exaggerated and swelled by those circumstances, which every gossip through whose hands it passes, chooses to add to the original account, till in process of time it comes around to the offender himself, in its magnified and distorted form, who now finds that he in his turn is aggrieved and calumniated; and thus, a difficult and complicated case of offence, grows out of what was at first very simple in its nature, and capable of being adjusted. We ought to go at once to the party offending us, before a syllable has past our lips on the subject to a third person; and we should also close our ears against the complaints of any individual, who would inform us of the fault of a brother, before he has told the offender himself.

Sometimes when persons have received a supposed offence, *they will endeavour to gain information from others in a circuitous and clandestine manner*, in order, as they think, to conduct the affair with prudence. This is crooked policy, and rarely succeeds. It is next to impossible to creep with a step so soft, and to speak with a voice so muffled, as to escape detection; and if the individual surprise us in the act of ferreting into holes

and corners for evidence, it will be sure to excite his indignation and disgust. No, go *to him at once*, AND ALONE. This is the command of Scripture, and it is approved by reason, Matt. xviii. 15—17. This single admonition is worth all the volumes that philosophy ever wrote, and ought to be inscribed in letters of gold. It cannot be too often repeated, nor can too much stress be laid upon it. Third persons, whose ears are ever open to catch reports, should be avoided as the plague; *they* are the mischief-makers, quarrel-mongers, and pests of our churches.

Great caution, however, should be observed *as to the spirit in which we go to the offending brother.* All the meekness and gentleness of Christ should be in our temper and manner. We should dip our very tongue in the fountain of love. Every feeling, every look, every tone of anger, should be suppressed. We should not *at once accuse* our brother of the injury, for the report may be false; but modestly ask him if it be correct. All attempts to extort confession by threatenings should be avoided; and instead of these, nothing should be employed but the appeals of wisdom, the gentle persuasions of love.* If we succeed in this private inter-

* There is a very interesting description of the manner in which private offences should be treated, in that inimitable book, "Social Religion Exemplified." Part of a dialogue, I here transcribe, as showing the manner and spirit in which this very difficult matter ought to be managed:—

"NEOPHYTUS. If *Epenetus* please, and with the good leave of the company, I would further request a brief account of *private offences*, that probably occurred among these professing brethren.

"EPENETUS. I shall then gratify my young friend, which I am persuaded will not be ungrateful to the company. Upon a time, in some discourse which *Egwan* (of whom you have heard something before) and one *Hyderus* had, wherein they differed in opinion, the latter told the former that he was an *insignificant fellow*, whose thoughts were not to be regarded. *Egwan* said in answer, that he took it very ill of him. The other replied, You may take it as you please. So their conversation ended in a cloud. *Egwan* had but little rest that night. Is it so, then, he says to himself, and yet did Christ redeem me? Did the Spirit of the Lord visit my heart? Did the church of Christ receive me? And must I (though weak and feeble) be called *insignificant?* Tossed through the night in much uneasiness, he thought to go in the morning to one of the elders to complain. He got up, and as usual, in the

view to gain our brother so far as to produce a little relenting, we ought to cherish, by the kindest expressions, these beginnings of repentance, and to avoid all demands of unnecessary concession, all haughty airs of conscious superiority, all insulting methods of dispensing pardon. "Brother," we should say, "my aim

first place committed himself to God: but while he was at prayer, mourning over his present uneasiness, that word came into his mind, *If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.* He quickly saw, that it was not his *immediate* business to *divulge* it to any body,—no, not to an elder; but to go directly to the brother who gave him the offence. Accordingly, he desired God to give him meekness of wisdom from above, and to bless his design. So he went to *Hyderus,* and spoke to him as follows:

Egwan. Brother I have had a very uneasy night; you spoke, I think, very unadvisedly with your lips, to say no worse of it; you have grieved me much, and surely you have sinned against God. I have judged it my duty to come and have some talk with you about it; and have mentioned it to none but the Lord. You know you called me, in disdain, *An insignificant fellow.* Pray, what do you think of the *expression,* and of the *spirit* in which it was spoken?

Hyderus. Truly, I think it was not worth your while to come to me about it. I charge you not with pride; yet pray does it not look very much that way, that you should make it your business to come hither to prove yourself valuable and significant?

Egwan. I came with no other design than to tell you my grievance. For if I am such a person as, with disdain, you described me, then am I not regarded by the Redeemer; have no portion in him; nor doth his Spirit dwell in me; nor hath he ever taken notice of me; otherwise, sure, I should be entitled to a place in the esteem of his children. Why did the church receive me? You have censured the whole church, as well as myself.

Hyderus. I do not pretend to justify what I said; but think you greatly aggravate it; whereas, you might as well have been easy without taking any notice of it.

Egwan. And suffer the sin to lie upon you? Brother, nothing is desired but repentance for sinning against God. I hope I am willing to think *meanly* of myself, but am not so willing that any thing appertaining to the Redeemer's kingdom should be treated with derision or disdain.

Hyderus. Dear brother, I disdain you not; you discover yourself to be a Christian of good improvement. I am sorry to have so sinned against God and you, and desire that brotherly love and tender respect may continue.

Egwan. Amen; I am satisfied, dear brother.

CHRISTOPHILUS. What a speedy, happy end was put to this offence! Oh, what endless strife of tongues, evil surmisings, ani-

was not to *degrade* you, but to *convince* you; and since you see and acknowledge your fault, I am satisfied, and shall forgive and forget it from this moment."

If the offender should refuse to acknowledge his fault, and it should be necessary for us to take a witness or two, which is our next step in settling a disagreement, *we must be very careful to select men of great discretion and calmness;* men who will not be likely to inflame, instead of healing the wound; men who will act as *mediators*, not as *partizans.*

It is absolutely necessary in order to offences being removed, that the offender, upon his being convicted of an injury, *should make all suitable concession;* and it will generally be found, that in long continued and complicated strifes, *this obligation becomes mutual.* Whoever is the ORIGINAL aggressor, a feud seldom continues long, ere *both parties* are to blame. Even the aggrieved individual has something to concede; and the way to induce the other to acknowledge his greater offence, is for him to confess his lesser one. It is the mark of a noble and ingenuous mind to confess an error, and solicit its forgiveness. "Confess your faults one to another," is an inspired injunction. The man who is too proud to acknowledge his fault, when his conduct demands it, has violated his duty, and is a fit subject for censure. There are some persons, so far forgetful of their obligations to Christ and to their brethren, as not only to refuse to make concession, but even to *give explanation.* Their proud spirits disdain even to afford the least satisfaction in the way of throwing light upon a supposed offence. This is most criminal, and is such a defiance of the authority of the Lord

mosities, and popular clamour, spring and prevail in some places, for want of observing such a method as this!

NEOPHYTUS. But what if *Egwan* had gone to the elder *first*, as he thought once to do?

EPENETUS. Why, then he would have been reproved for taking such a wrong step; would have been better informed, and sent about his business.

NEOPHYTUS. But what if *Hyderus* had justified himself and persisted in his sin?

EPENETUS. Then *Egwan* must have taken another opportunity, and desired a brother or two to go along with him; that they might use their joint endeavours to bring the offender to repentance.

Jesus, as ought to bring the individual before the bar of the church.

We should be very cautious *not to exact unreasonable concession.* A revengeful spirit is often as effectually gratified by imposing hard and humiliating terms of reconciliation, as it possibly could be by making the severest retaliation. No offender is so severely punished, as he who is obliged to degrade himself in order to obtain a pardon. And as all revenge is unlawful, we should be extremely careful not to gratify it at the very time and by the manner in which we are dispensing pardon. To convince a brother, not to degrade him, is the object we are to seek; and especially should we endeavour to show him, that his offence is more against Christ, than against ourselves.

When suitable acknowledgments are made, *the act of forgiveness is no longer optional with us.* From that moment every spark of anger, every feeling of a revengeful nature, is to be quenched. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the devil." Ephes. iv. 26, 27. If we suffer sleep to visit our eyes before we have forgiven an offending, but penitent brother, *we* are committing a greater offence against Christ, than our brother has committed against us. The man that takes a revengeful temper to his pillow, is inviting Satan to be his guest. Such a man would probably tremble at the thought of taking a harlot to his bed; but is it no crime to sleep in the embrace of a *fiend?* The word revenge should be blotted from the Christian's vocabulary by the tears which he sheds for his own offences. How can an implacable Christian repeat that petition of our Lord's prayer, "Forgive me my trespasses *as* I forgive them that trespass against me?" Does he forget that if he uses such language while he is living in a state of resentment against a brother, *he is praying for perdition*—for how does he forgive them that trespass against him? By revenge. How strong is the language of Paul. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be kind one to another, and tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for

Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." Ephes. iv. 30—32 What motives to a forgiving spirit!! Can that man have ever tasted the sweets of pardoning mercy who refuses to forgive an erring brother? Go, Christian professor, go first to the law, and learn thy twice ten thousand sins; go in imagination to the brink of the bottomless pit, and as thou hearkenest to the howlings of the damned, remember that those howlings might have been thine; then go the cross, and while thou lookest on the bleeding victim, which is nailed to it, hearken to the accents of mercy which breathe like soft music in thine ear, "Go in peace, thy sins are all forgiven thee." What, *will* you, *can* you return from such scenes, with purposes of revenge? No; impossible. An *implacable Christian* is a contradiction in terms. "Bigots there may be, and have been, of all denominations; but an implacable, irreconcilable, unforgiving Christian, is of the same figure of speech, as a godly adulterer, a religious drunkard, a devout murderer."

The last step in reclaiming an offender, is *to bring him before the assembled church.* "If he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." Every effort that ingenuity can invent, affection prompt, or patience can conduct, ought to be made, before it be brought to be investigated by the brethren at large. If every trivial disagreement be laid before the church, it will soon become a court of common pleas, and have all its time consumed in adjusting matters of which it ought never to have heard.

An offence ought never to be considered as removed, until love is restored. We should never rest until such an explanation has been given and received, as will enable us to return to harmony and confidence. A mere cessation of actual hostilities may do for the intercourse of the world, but not for the fellowship of the saints. There is no actual strife between the tenants of the sepulchre; but the cold and gloomy stillness of a church yard is an inappropriate emblem of the peace of a Christian church. In such a community we expect, that no

only will the discords and sounds of enmity be hushed, but the sweet harmonies of love be heard; not only that the conflict of rage will terminate, but be succeeded by the activity of genuine affection.

When once an offence has been removed, it should never be adverted to in future. Its very remembrance should if possible be washed from the memory by the waters of Lethe. Other causes of disagreement may exist, and fresh feuds arise; but the old one is dead and buried, and its angry ghost should never be evoked to add fury to the passion of its successor. Nor should *we*, when in our turn we are convicted of an error, shelter ourselves from reproof, by reminding our reprover, that he was once guilty of a similar offence. This is mean, dishonourable, unchristian, and mischievous.

Every Christian should bear reproof with meekness. Few know how to give reproof with propriety, still fewer how to bear it. "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be as excellent oil, which shall not break my head." How small is the number who can adopt this language in sincerity. What wounded pride, what mortification and resentment are felt by many when their faults are told to them. When we have so far sinned as to deserve rebuke, we ought to have humility enough to bear it with meekness; and should it be delivered in greater weight, or with less affection than we think is proper, a penitential remembrance of our offence should prevent all feelings of irritation or resentment. The scripture is very severe in its language to those who turn with neglect, anger, or disgust from the admonitions of their brethren. "He that despiseth reproof sinneth." Prov. x. 17. "He that hateth reproof is brutish." Prov. xii. 1. "He that is often reproved, and yet hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy." Prov. xxix. 1. Such persons are guilty of great pride, great neglect of the word of God, and great contempt of one of the ordinances of Heaven, and thus injure their souls by that which was given to benefit them.

Do not then act so wickedly as to turn with indignation from a brother that comes in the spirit of meekness to admonish and reprove you. Rather thank him for

his fidelity, and profit by his kindness. I know not a more decisive mark of true and strong piety than a willingness to receive reproof with meekness and to profit by admonition, come from whom it might.

2. If the peace of the church be preserved, *the members must watch against, and repress,* A TATTLING DISPOSITION.

There are few circumstances which tend more to disturb the harmony and repose of our societies, than a proneness in some of their members, to a gossiping, tattling disposition. There are persons so deeply infected with the Athenian passion to hear or tell some new thing, that their ears or lips are always open. With insatiable appetite they devour all the news they can by any means collect, and are never easy until it is all disgorged again, to the unspeakable annoyance and disgust of others around them. It is one of the mysteries of God's natural government, that such should gain a sort of adventitious consequence by the mischief they occasion, and be thus sheltered from scorn by being regarded with dread. The *tattler* is of this description: I mean the individual who loves to talk of other men's matters, and especially of their *faults:* for it will be found, that by a singular perversity of disposition, those who love to talk about the circumstances of others, rarely ever select their *excellencies* as matters of discourse, but almost always fix upon their *failings;* and thus, to borrow a simile of Solomon's, they resemble the fly which neglects the healthful part of the frame to pitch and luxuriate on the sore.

In the case of tattling there are generally three parties to blame; there is first the gossip, then the person who is weak enough to listen to, and report the tales; and lastly, the individual who is the subject of the report, who suffers his mind to be irritated, instead of going, in the spirit of meekness, to require an explanation from the original reporter.

Now let it be a rule with every church member, *to avoid speaking of the circumstances, and especially of the faults of others.* Let this rule have the sanctity of the laws of Heaven, and the immutability of those of the Medes and Persians. Let every individual resolve with himself thus: "I will be slow to speak of others

I will neither *originate* a report by saying what I think, nor help to *circulate* a report by repeating what I hear." This is a most wise regulation, which would at once preserve our own peace and the peace of society. We should beware of saying any thing, which by the perverted ingenuity of a slanderous disposition, may become the basis of a tale to the disadvantage of another. It is not enough, as I have hinted, that we do not *originate* a report, but we ought not to *circulate* it. When it reaches us, there it should stop and go no farther. We should give it to prudence, to be buried in silence. *We must never appear pleased* with the tales of gossips and newsmongers, much less with the scandals of the backbiter; our smile is their reward. *If there were no listeners, there would be no reporters.* In company let us always discourage and repress such conversation.

Let us avoid and discourage the hollow deceitful practice of indulging a tattling disposition under the cover of lamenting over the faults of our brethren.

Many who would be afraid or ashamed to mention the faults of a brother in the way of direct affirmation or report, easily find, or attempt to find, a disguise for their backbiting disposition in *affected lamentations.* "What a pity it is," they exclaim, "that brother B. should have behaved so ill. Poor man, I am sorry that he should have committed himself. The petulance of his temper is exceedingly to be regretted. He does not much honour religion." "And then," replies a second, "how sorry I am to hear this report of sister C.; how the world will talk, and the cause of Christ suffer by such unwarrantable things in the conduct of a professor. It will not be a secret long, or I would not mention it." "Oh," says a third, "I have heard whispers of the same kind in times past. I have long suspected it, and mentioned my fears some months ago to a friend or two. I thought she was not the person she appeared to be. I am very sorry for her, and for the cause of Christ. I have long had my suspicions, and now they are all confirmed. I shall tell the friends to whom I expressed my fears what I have now heard." In this way is a tattling disposition indulged in the circles of even good people, under the guise of lamenta-

tion for the sins of others. "Odious and disgusting cant," would a noble and honourable Christian exclaim, with hallowed indignation, "which of you, if you really lamented the fact, would report it? which of you has gone to the erring individual, inquired into the truth of the matter, and, finding it true, has mildly expostulated? Let your lamentations be poured out before God and the offender, but to none else."

Others, again, indulge this disposition *by running about to inquire into the truth of a report which they say has reached them, respecting a brother.* Have you heard any thing of brother H. lately? they ask with a significant look. "No;" replies the person. "Then I suppose it is not true." "Why, what have you heard? Nothing I hope affecting his moral character." "Not *very* materially; but I hope it is false." The tattler can not go, however, without letting out the secret, and then sets off to inquire of another and another. Mischief making creature. Why had he not gone, as was his obvious duty, to the individual who was the subject of the report, and inquired of him the truth of it? Aye, but then the story would have been contradicted at once, and the pleasure of telling it would have been ended.

There are cases in which a modest disclosure of the failings of others *is necessary.* Such, for example, as when a church is likely to be deceived in the character of an individual, whom it is about to admit to communion. In such instances, the person who is aware of the imposition that is likely to be practised, should go directly to the pastor, and make him acquainted with the fact; instead of which some persons whisper their suspicions to any and to many, *except* the pastor. It is perfectly lawful also to prevent any brother from being betrayed into a ruinous confidence in pecuniary matters by informing him of the character of the individual by whom he is about to be deceived. Silence, in such cases, would be an obvious injury.

BE SLOW TO SPEAK, then, is a maxim which every Christian should always keep before his eyes. Silent people can do no harm; but talkers are always dangerous.

III. Besides these things, there are duties which members owe to the church in its *collective* capacity.

1. They are bound *to take a deep interest in its concerns, and to seek its prosperity by all lawful means.*

Every one should feel that he has a personal share in the welfare of the society. He should consider that having selected that particular community with which he is associated, as his religious home, he is under a solemn obligation to promote, by every proper effort, its real interest. He is to be indifferent to nothing which at any time affects its prosperity. Some members, from the moment they have joined a Christian church take no concern in any of its affairs. They scarcely ever attend a church meeting; they know neither who are excluded, nor who are received. If members are added, they express no delight; if none are admitted, they feel no grief. They fill up their places at the table of the Lord, and in the house of God; and beyond this, seem to have nothing else to do with the church. This is a most criminal apathy; a Christian ought to be as tremblingly alive to the welfare of the religious society to which he is united, as he is to the success of his worldly affairs.

2. They are bound *to attend all the meetings of the church,* at least so far as their circumstances will allow. They had better be absent from sermons and prayer-meetings, than from these. How can they know the state of the society, if they are not present when its affairs are exhibited and arranged? or how can they exercise that proper confidence in the piety of the brethren, which is essential to fellowship, if they are absent at the time of their admission?

3. *They should most conscientiously devote their gifts, graces, and abilities to the service of the church, in an orderly and modest way;* neither obtruding their assistance when it is not required, nor withholding it when it is solicited. Those who have gifts of *prayer* should not be backward to exercise them for the edification of their brethren. Those who have *penetration* and *sound judgment,* should render their counsel and advice upon every occasion. Persons of large and respectable *worldly connexions* may often use their influence with great benefit to the *temporal* affairs of the society.

And there is one line of charitable exertion, which would be peculiarly beneficial, and which has been too much neglected in all our societies; I mean the practice of *respectable members reading the Scriptures, religious tracts, and sermons, in the habitations of the poor.* I am aware that this is an age when many run to an fro, and when lay preaching is carried to a very improper and mischievous extent. Some who have no other qualification for preaching than boldness and ignorance, are every Sabbath employed, of whom it might be said, that it is a pity they have not the gift of silence. Unfortunately, those who are *most qualified*, are frequently *least disposed;* while the least qualified, are the most zealous. But how many wise, judicious, holy men, are there in our churches, who would be most honourably, and most usefully employed, in reading the words of life, and short evangelical sermons, in the cottages of the poor. Let a convenient house be selected, and the neighbours invited to attend: and who can tell what vast benefit would accrue from such a scheme? By the blessing of God upon these efforts, reformation would be wrought in the lower classes; religion would gain an entrance where it could be introduced by no other means; and our churches be replenished with holy, consistent members. Persons of *respectable circumstances in life*, especially, should thus employ themselves, as *their* situation gives them greater influence. Females may be thus engaged, without transgressing either against the injunction of the apostle, or the modesty which is so becoming their sex. I am astonished that means of usefulness so simple, so easy, and so efficient, are not more generally employed.

4. It is due to the authority of the church, that *every member should cordially submit to its discipline.* Without this, order would be destroyed, and the reign of anarchy introduced. This, indeed, as we have already considered, is essentially implied in the very act of joining the church; and no one ought to think of such an act of union, who is not determined to submit to its rules and its decisions.

☞ The foregoing tract is taken from the Church Member's Guide, a book which deserves to be in the hands of every Christian.

No. 92.

THE DUTIES OF

CHURCH MEMBERS

TO THEIR PASTORS.

FROM THE CHURCH MEMBER'S GUIDE, BY J. A. JAMES.

It is the will and appointment of the Lord Jesus Christ, the king and head of his churches, that they should behave towards their pastors, as his ministers, who come in his name, bear his commands, and transact his business; and who are to be treated in every respect, in a manner that corresponds with their office. In a subordinate sense, they are ambassadors for Christ, and are to be received and esteemed in a way that corresponds with the authority and glory of him who commissions them. Whoever slights, insults, or neglects them, in the discharge of their official duties, disobeys and despises their divine Master, who will keenly resent all the injuries that are offered them. No earthly government will allow its messengers to be rejected and insulted with impunity, much less will the Lord of the church. Those who entertain low thoughts of the pastoral office, and neglect its ministrations; who speak contemptuously of their ministers; who excite a spirit of resistance to their counsels, admonitions, and reproofs; who endeavour to lessen that just reverence, to which for their works' sake, and on their Master's behalf they are entitled, certainly despise them, and not only them, but Him that sent them also, and for such conduct will incur the heavy displeasure of Christ, Luke x. 16. 1 Thess. v. 13.

But to descend to particulars; the duty of church members towards their pastors includes:

I. *Submission to their just and scriptural authority.*

It is readily admitted that the unscriptural, and therefore usurped domination of the priesthood is the root whence arose the whole system of papal tyranny; which, springing up like a tree of poison in the garden of the Lord, withered by its shadow, and blighted by its influence,

almost every plant and flower of genuine Christianity. It is matter of no regret, therefore, nor of surprise, if a ceaseless jealousy should be maintained by those who understand the principles of religious liberty, against the encroachments of pastoral authority. Still, however, there is authority belonging to the pastor; for office without authority is a solecism. "Remember them that have the *rule over you*," said Paul to the Hebrews, xiii. 7. "*Obey* them that have the *rule over you*. *Submit* yourselves, for they watch for your souls," ver. 17. "They addicted themselves to the ministry; *submit* yourselves to such." 1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16. These are inspired injunctions, and they enjoin *obedience* and *submission* on Christian churches to their pastors. The authority of pastors, however, is not legislative or coercive, but simply declarative and executive. To define with precision its limits, is as difficult as to mark the boundaries of the several colours of the rainbow, or those of light and darkness at the hour of twilight in the hemisphere. The minister is to command, yet he is not to "lord it over God's heritage." This is not the only case, in which the precise limits of authority are left undefined by the Scriptures. The duties of the conjugal union are laid down in the same general manner: the husband is to rule and the wife to obey; yet it is difficult to declare where in this instance authority and submission end. In each of these instances the union is founded on mutual love, confidence, and esteem, and it might therefore be rationally supposed, that under these circumstances general terms are sufficient, and that there would arise no contests for power. If the people see that all the authority of their pastor is employed for their benefit, they will not be inclined to ascertain by measurement whether he has passed its limits. The very circumstance of his prerogative being thus undefined, should on the one hand make *him* afraid of *extending* it, and on the other, render his church cautious of *diminishing* it. It is my decided conviction, that in *some* of our churches, the pastor is depressed far below his just level. He is considered merely in the light of a speaking brother. He has no official distinction or authority. He may flatter like a sycophant, he may beg like a servant, he may woo like a lover; but he is not permitted to enjoin like a ruler. His opinion is received with no deference, his person treated

with no respect, and in the presence of some of his lay tyrants, if he say any thing at all, it must be somewhat similar to the ancient soothsayers, for he is only permitted to peep and mutter from the dust.

Those persons who are anxious to strip their pastors of all just elevation, cannot expect to derive much edification from their labours; for instruction and advice, like substances falling to the earth, impress the mind with a momentum, proportionate to the height from which they descend.

II. Church members should treat their pastors *with distinguishing honour, esteem, and love.*

"Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honour, especially they that labour in the word and doctrine." 1 Tim. v. 17. "Know them that have the rule over you, and esteem them very highly in love, for their works' sake." 1 Thess. v. 11, 12. To prescribe in what way our love should express itself, is almost needless, as love is the most inventive passion of the heart, and will find or make a thousand opportunities for displaying its power. Love is also *practical*, as well as ingenious, and does not confine itself either to the speculations of the judgment, or the feelings of the heart. It breathes in kind words, and lives in kind deeds. Where a minister is properly esteemed and loved, there will be the greatest deference for his opinions, the most delicate attention to his comfort, a scrupulous respect for his character. Some people treat their minister as if he could feel nothing but blows. They are rude, uncourteous, churlish. Instead of this, let him see the most studious and constant care to promote his happiness and usefulness. When he is in sickness, visit him; in trouble, sympathise with him; when absent from home, take a kind interest in his family; when he returns, greet him with a smile; at the close of the labours of the Sabbath, let the deacons and leading members gather round him, and not suffer him to retire from his scene of public labours without the reward of some tokens of their approbation, if it be only one friendly pressure of the hand. Let him see that his prayers, and sermons, and solicitude, render him dear to the hearts of his flock. It is astonishing what an influence is sometimes produced upon a minister's mind and comfort, even by the least expression of his people's regard. Of this we

have a beautiful instance in the life of Paul. On that important journey to Rome, which was to decide the question of life or death, he appears to have felt a season of temporary depression when the imperial city presented itself to his view. In silent meditation he revolved, not without some degree of dismay, his approaching appeal to a tribunal from which he had nothing in the way of clemency to expect. For a little while the heroism of this exalted man was somewhat affected by his situation. At this juncture some of the Roman Christians, who had been apprised of his approach, came out as far as the Appii-forum, and the three taverns, to meet him, "whom, when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage." From that moment fears of Nero, of prison, and of death, all left him. He sprung forward with new ardour in his career, prepared to offer himself in sacrifice on the altar of martyrdom. If then the love of these brethren, who had travelled a few stages to meet Paul, produced so happy an effect upon the mind of this illustrious apostle, how certainly might the members of our churches calculate upon a similar influence being produced upon the hearts of their pastors, by even the smaller expressions of their affection.

III. *Attendance upon their ministration*, is another duty which church members owe their pastors.

This attendance should be *constant*, not occasional. Some of our members give unspeakable pain to their pastors by the irregularity of their visits to the house of God. A little inclemency of weather, or the slightest indisposition of body, is sure to render their seats vacant. Sometimes a still more guilty cause than this exists. Oh! "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines triumph." Many professors do not scruple to devote a part of the Sabbath to *travelling*. They do not probably set off upon a journey in the morning of the Sabbath, and travel all day, but they set off perhaps on Saturday evening, and arrive at home late on Sunday morning; or they leave home after tea on Sunday evening, and thus take only a part of the hallowed day from its destined purpose. This practice, it is to be feared, has much increased of late, and is become one of the prevailing sins of the religious world. Such persons deserve to be brought under the censures of the church.

Some persons are irregular in their attendance through the *distance at which they live from their place of public worship.* Oftentimes this is unavoidable; but it is a great inconsistency for professing Christians voluntarily to choose a residence which from its remoteness from the house of God must often deprive them of the communion of the saints. Such a disposition to sacrifice spiritual privileges to mere temporal enjoyment, does not afford much evidence that religion is with them the one thing needful, or that they have the mind of David, who thought the threshold of the sanctuary was to be preferred to the saloon and the park of the palace. Injurious as the practice necessarily must be to the individuals themselves, it is still more so to their servants and children.

Professing Christians should feel the obligations to attend *week day services.* Most ministers have often to complain, that they are half deserted on these occasions. Surely, with such hearts and amidst such circumstances as ours, it is too long to go from Sabbath to Sabbath without the aid of public worship. All persons have not the command of their own time; but in the case of those who have, the neglect is inexcusable, and argues a very low state of religion in the soul.

A minister has a right to expect his members at the meetings for *social prayer.* The Christian that neglects these betrays such an utter indifference to the interests of the church, and the comfort of the pastor, as well as so much lukewarmness in his own personal religion, as to be a fit subject for the exercise of *discipline.*

IV. *Earnest prayer.* How often and how earnestly did the great apostle of the Gentiles repeat that sentence which contained at once the authority of a command and the tenderness of a petition—"Brethren pray for us." In another place, he ascribes his deliverance and preservation to the prayers of the churches—"You also helping together by prayer for us." 2 Cor. i. 11. Surely then if this illustrious man was dependent upon, and indebted to the prayers of Christians, how much more so the ordinary ministers of Christ! Pray then for your ministers; for the increase of their intellectual attainments, spiritual qualifications, and ministerial success. Pray for them in your private approaches to the throne of grace; pray for them at the family altar; and thus teach your servants and children to

respect and love them. Reasons both numerous and cogent enforce this duty. It is enjoined by divine authority. It is due to the arduous nature of their employment. Little do our churches know the number and magnitude of our temptations, discouragements, difficulties, and trials.

> "'Tis not a cause of small import
> The pastor's care demands,
> But what might fill an angel's heart,
> And fill'd a Saviour's hands."

Our office is no bed of down or of roses, on which the indolent may repose with careless indifference, or uninterrupted slumbers. Far, very far from it. Cares of oppressive weight; anxieties which can be known only by experience; labours of a mental kind almost too strong and incessant for the powers of mind to sustain, fall to our lot, and demand the prayerful sympathy of our flocks. And then as another claim for our people's prayers, we might urge the consideration of their own interest, which is identified with all *our* efforts. We are to our people just what God makes us, and no more, and he is willing to make us almost what they ask. A regard to their own spiritual profit, if nothing else, should induce them to bear us much on their hearts before the throne of divine grace. Prayer is a means of assisting a minister which is within the reach of all. They who can do nothing more, can pray. The *sick*, who cannot encourage their minister by their presence in the sanctuary, can bear him upon their hearts in their lonely chamber: the *poor* who cannot add to his temporal comfort by pecuniary donations, can supplicate their God "to supply all his needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus:" the *timid*, who cannot approach to offer him the tribute of their gratitude, can pour their praises into the ear of Jehovah, and entreat him still to encourage the soul of his servant: the *ignorant*, who cannot hope to add one idea to the stock of his knowledge, can place him by prayer before the fountain of celestial radiance: even the *dying*, who can no longer busy themselves as aforetime for his interests, can gather up their remaining strength, and employ it in the way of prayer for their pastor.

Prayer, if it be sincere, always increases our affection for its object. We never feel even our dearest friends to be so dear, as when we have commended them to the good

ness of God. It is the best extinguisher of enmity, and the best fuel for the flame of love. If some professing Christians were to take from the time they spend in *praising* their ministers, and others from that which they employ in *blaming* them, and both were to devote it to the act of praying for them, the former would find still more cause for admiration, and the latter far less reason for censure.

V. Members *should encourage others to attend upon the ministry of their pastors.*

Let *us* go up to the house of the Lord, is an invitation which they should often address to the people of the world, who either attend no place of worship at all, or where the truth is not preached. A minister cannot himself ask people to attend his place of worship, but those who are in the habit of hearing him can; and it is astonishing to what an extent the usefulness of private Christians may be carried in this way. I have received very many into the fellowship of the church under my care, who were first brought under the sound of the gospel by the kind solicitations of a pious neighbour. *To draw away the hearers of one faithful preacher to another*, is a despicable ambition—mere sectarian zeal: but to invite those who never hear the gospel, to listen to the joyful sound, is an effort worthy the mind of an angel. Shall sinners invite one another to iniquity —to the brothel, the theatre, the tavern—and Christians not attempt to draw them to the house of God? This is one way in which every member, of every church, may be the means of doing great good; the rich, the poor, male and female, masters and servants, young and old, have all some acquaintance over whom they may exert their influence; and how can it be better employed than in attracting them to those places

> "Where streams of heavenly mercy flow,
> And words of sweet salvation sound?"

VI. It is incumbent on church members *to make known to their pastor any thing of importance that occurs within the scope of their observation, or the course of their experience, relating to his church and congregation.*

For instance, their own spiritual embarrassments, trials, temptations; the declensions, backslidings, and sins of others, which they imagine may have escaped his notice, and which they have first tried by their own personal efforts to remove. If they perceive any root of bitterness

growing up, which they have not strength or skill enough to eradicate, it is then manifestly their duty to inform him of the circumstance. If they perceive any individual whose case has been overlooked, any one in circumstances which need sympathy or relief, any who are struggling with affliction, but are too modest or timid to disclose their situation: they should bring all such occurrences under his notice. Especially should they *encourage by their own personal attentions, any persons in the congregation who appear to be under religious concern;* in such cases they should put forth all their tenderest solicitude to shelter and cherish these hopeful beginnings, and introduce the subjects of them to their minister. There are some Christians—but do they indeed deserve the name? —who would see all the process of conversion going on in the very next seat to theirs, and observe the fixed attention, the anxious look, the tearful eye, the serious deportment— and all this repeated one Sabbath after another—without the least possible interest, or ever exchanging a single syllable with the inquiring penitent! Shame, shame on such professors! Can the love of Christ dwell in such cold and careless hearts? Can *they* have ever felt conviction of sin? How easy and how incumbent is it to introduce ourselves to such individuals; a word, a look, would be received with gratitude.

VII. *Zealous co-operation in all schemes of usefulness proposed by the pastor, whether for the benefit of their own society in particular, or the welfare of the church, and the world at large, is the duty of Christians.*

This is an age of restless activity, practical benevolence, and progressive improvement. One scheme of benefit often contains the germs of many more. The love of innovation and the dread of it, are equally remote from true wisdom. Zeal, when guided by wisdom, is a noble element of character, and the source of incalculable good. A church ought always to stand ready to support any scheme which is proved to their judgment to be beneficial either to themselves or others. It is most disheartening to ministers, to find all their efforts counteracted by that ignorance which can comprehend nothing strange, that bigotry which is attached to every thing old, by that timidity which starts at every thing new, or by that avarice which condemns every thing expensive. Usages and cus-

toms that are venerable for their antiquity, I admit, should not be touched by hot spirits and rude hands, lest in removing the sediment deposited by the stream of time at the base of the fabric, they should touch the foundation itself: But where the word of God is the line and the plummet; where this line is held by the hand of caution, and watched by the eye of wisdom; in such cases, innovation upon the customs of our churches is a blessing, and ought to receive the support of the people. It is a scandal to any Christian society, when the flame of ministerial zeal is allowed to burn, without enkindling a similar fire.

VIII. *A most delicate and tender regard for the pastor's reputation.* A minister's character is the lock of his strength; and if once this be sacrificed, he is like Samson shorn of his hair, a poor, feeble, faltering creature, the pity of his friends and the derision of his enemies. I would not have bad ministers screened, nor would I have good ones maligned. When a preacher of righteousness has stood in the way of sinners, and walked in the counsel of the ungodly, he should never again open his lips in the great congregation, until his repentance is as notorious as his sin. But while his character is unsullied, his friends should preserve it with as much care against the tongue of the slanderer, as they would his life against the hand of the assassin.

When I consider the restless malignity of the great enemy of God and holiness, and add to this his subtlety and craft; when I consider how much his malice would be gratified, and his schemes promoted, by blackening the character of the ministers of the gospel; when I consider what a multitude of creatures there are who are his vassals, and under his influence, creatures so destitute of moral principle, and so filled with venomous spite against religion, as to be prepared to go any lengths in maligning the righteous, and especially their ministers, I can account for it on no other ground than that of a special interposition of Providence, that the reputation of Christian pastors is not more frequently attacked by slander, and destroyed by calumny. But probably we see in this, as in other cases that wise arrangement of Providence by which things of delicacy and consequence are preserved, by calling forth greater solicitude for their safety. Church members should therefore be tremblingly alive to the importance

of defending their minister's character. They should neither expect to see him perfect, nor hunt after his imperfections. When they cannot but see his imperfections—imperfections which after all may be consistent with not only real, but eminent piety—they should not take pleasure in either magnifying or looking at them; but make all reasonable excuse for them, and endeavour to lose sight of his infirmities in his virtues, as they do the spots of the sun amidst the blaze of radiance with which they are surrounded. Let them not be the subject of conversation even between yourselves, much less before your children, servants, and the world. If *you* talk of his faults in derision, who will speak of his excellencies with admiration? Do not look at him with *suspicion*, but repose an honourable confidence in his character. Do not make him an offender for a word, and refuse to him that charity and candour of judgment, which would be granted to every one else. Do not magnify indiscretions into immoralities, and exact from him that absolute perfection, which in your own case you find to be unattainable. Beware of whispers, inuendoes, significant nods, and that slanderous silence, which is more defamatory than the broadest accusation.

Defend him against the groundless attacks of others. Never hear him spoken of with undeserved reproach, without indignantly repelling the shafts of calumny. Express your firm and dignified displeasure against the wittling that would make him ridiculous, the scorner that would render him contemptible, and the defamer that would brand him as immoral.

Especially guard against those creeping reptiles which infest our churches, and are perpetually insinuating that their ministers do not preach the gospel, merely because they do not incessantly repeat the same truths in the same words; because they do not allegorize and spiritualize all the facts of the Old Testament, until they have found as much gospel in the horses of Pharaoh's chariot as they can in Paul's epistles; and because they have dared to enforce the moral law as the rule of the believer's conduct. This Antinomian spirit has become the pest of many churches. It is the most mischievous and disgusting of all errors. If the heresies which abound in the spiritual world were to be represented by the noxious animals of

the natural world, we could find some errors that would answer to the vulture, the tiger, and the serpent; but we could find nothing that would be an adequate emblem of Antinomianism, except by a creation of our own we had united in some monstrous reptile, the venom of the wasp, with the deformity of the spider, and the slime of the snail.

IX. *Liberal support.* The Scripture is very explicit on this head: "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things," Gal. vi. 6. "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? —even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel." 1 Cor. ix. 7, 14. The necessity of this appears from the injunctions delivered to ministers to devote themselves exclusively to the duties of their office. 2 Tim. ii. 4. 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15. I by no means contend that it is unlawful for a minister to engage in secular concerns; for necessity is a law which supersedes the ordinary rules of human conduct: And what are they to do, whose stipend is too small to support a family, and who have no private source of supply? A minister is under additional obligations to provide for things honest, not only in the sight of the Lord, but of men; to owe no man any thing, to provide for his own house; and if he is not enabled to do this by the liberality of his flock, and has no private fortune, he must have recourse to the labour of his hands. It is to the deep, and wide, and endless reproach of some churches, that although possessed of ability to support their pastors in comfort, they dole out but a wretched pittance from their affluence, leaving them to make up the deficiency by a school; and then with insulting cruelty complain that their sermons are very meagre, and have a great sameness. Such congregations, if they were treated as they deserve, would be put upon abstinence for at least a twelve month, or until they were willing to support their pastor in comfort. They love him dearly with their lips, but hate him as cordially with their pockets. They keep him poor to keep him humble, forgetting that as humility is no less necessary for themselves than for him, this is an argument why the articles which minister to *their* pride, should be retrenched in order to support his comfort. This is certainly not drawing them with the cords of love and the bands of a man, but treating them like animals who are

tamed into submission by hunger, and kept humble by being kept poor. It is curious to hear how some persons will entreat God to bless their minister in his basket and his store, while alas! poor man, they have taken care that his basket should be empty, and his store nothingness itself. Is not this mocking both God and his minister with a solemn sound upon a thoughtless tongue?

Many rich Christians spend more in the needless wine they individually drink, than they contribute towards the support of their pastor; and others give more for the sugar that sweetens their tea, than they do for all the advantages of public worship. A reproach of this kind yet rests upon multitudes, which it is high time should be rolled away.

It is extremely difficult, where a matter of this kind must be left to voluntary contribution, and the dictates of individual liberty, to lay down particular rules; all that can be done, is, to state general principles, and leave these to operate in particular cases. Let all Christians therefore consider what is a just and generous reward for the labours of a man, who is devoting his life to assist them in obtaining an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory:—who, in assisting them to gain eternal life, exerts at the same time an indirect, but a beneficial influence upon all their temporal prosperity—who by his ministrations, soothes their cares, lightens their sorrows, mortifies their sins, throws a radiance over their darkest scenes, and gilds their brightest ones with additional splendour? who brings heaven down to earth for their comfort, and elevates them from earth to heaven; and who, after mitigating for them the ills of time with an anticipation of the joys of eternity, is prepared to attend them to the verge of the dark valley, and irradiate its gloom with the visions of immortality.

Let it not be thought that what is given to a minister is a *charitable donation;* it is the payment of a just debt. It is what Christ claims for his faithful servants, and which cannot be withheld without robbery. I spurn for myself and for my brethren, the degrading apprehension that we are supported by charity. We are not pensioners upon mere bounty. Our appeal is to justice; and if our claims are denied on this ground, we refuse to plead before any other tribunal, and refer the matter to the great assize.

No. 86.

MINISTERIAL GIFTS

TO BE

SOUGHT OUT AND ENCOURAGED.

ADDRESSED TO THE CHURCHES

Permit us, dear brethren, to ask your attention to a subject, which yields not, in point of importance, to any other connected with your duties and your welfare.

We need say nothing concerning the rank which the Christian ministry occupies among the means by which the Saviour's kingdom is to be spread through the earth. Nor need we inform you, that the number of faithful ministers is now inadequate to supply our churches at home, while there are many fields in our own land which are white unto the harvest, and heathen countries appeal to us, by their crimes and miseries, to send them the messengers of salvation.

It appears to us that this deficiency of ministers must be attributed to a neglect of duty on the part of the churches. We cannot suppose that God is inattentive to the wants of his church and of the world, and purposely withholds a competent supply of ministers.

Wrong notions, it is believed, exist concerning the nature of a call to the ministry, and in regard to the duty of the churches to seek out and foster ministerial talent.

We firmly believe that no man ought to enter into the ministry, whom God has not called to the service. But the question is, how is the call of God to be ascertained? That a miraculous intimation of his will is to be expected, no rational man, at the present day, believes. This will must, then, be learned from the feelings which the Holy Spirit produces in the mind of the individual himself; from the gifts of heart and of

intellect with which he is endowed; from the course of providence; and from other circumstances.

Two things are necessary to prove a call to the ministry to be from God. The first is, that the individual possess a sincere desire to be thus employed. He must feel a strong concern for the glory of God, and for the salvation of men. His heart must be moved with desires to proclaim the love of Christ to dying sinners, and to persuade them to be reconciled to God. He must feel such an impulse of soul towards this point —such a concentration of his thoughts and affections —that he cannot, with a quiet mind, engage in any other employment. He must be willing to part with prospects of emolument, and to forego all worldly advantages, for the sake of his Saviour and of his fellow men. These are some of the feelings which will occupy the heart of a man, whom God designs for the ministry. Of these feelings the individual himself is the only judge, because he alone can determine whether they are sincere, strong and permanent.

But another necessary thing is, that he possess suitable gifts. We mean not, that he must be qualified immediately to preach, because no man is qualified to preach with profit, until his mind has been furnished with adequate knowledge, and he has learned how to communicate that knowledge. By suitable gifts we mean a sound understanding, a capacity and a desire to learn, an aptitude to teach, a reasonable degree of ability to be useful to his fellow men as a minister, when his mind shall have been cultivated as much as circumstances may allow.

Of these points, the individual is not a competent judge. His brethren must judge for him. The church has thus a duty to perform. She ought to watch the character and conduct of her young men. An individual, whom God designs for the ministry, will usually show the bent of his disposition, by his zeal for the support of Sabbath schools, by his pertinent exhortations in the conference room, and by his prayers in social meetings. If the ministerial spirit exist within him, it will find occasion to display itself; and in most cases, a church is convinced of the call of a young man to the

ministry as soon as he is himself, and sometimes sooner. In such cases as this, it is the duty of pastors, deacons, and other members of the church, to converse with such persons, to inquire concerning their feelings, and to give them all proper encouragement. If the individuals have themselves been thoughtful and anxious concerning their duty, such an affectionate and judicious conversation may remove their doubts, and confirm their decisions, by bringing in aid of their own convic tions, the opinions of their brethren.

It is believed that a very different course is frequently pursued. Young men are left to struggle with their feelings without one word of advice or encouragement. The more modest they are, and therefore the more deserving of sympathy, the more reluctant they are to disclose their feelings, lest they should be attributed to pride and presumption. A sense of unfitness, the greatness of the work, doubts concerning duty, all throng upon the mind, and often produce inconceivable distress, which one word of kind sympathy and advice from a pastor or Christian friend would remove. Many young men, it cannot be doubted, are overcome by these anxieties, doubts, and fears, and relinquish the thought of the ministry, who ought to preach the gospel. It is a mistake to suppose, that if it be a man's duty to preach, he will force his way through every obstacle. A man may neglect his duty to preach, as he may neglect any other duty; and he is the more liable to neglect this duty, because the conscientious mind will consider it as a far less sin to refuse to preach, though it be a duty, than to preach when it is not. If his doubts preponderate in the smallest degree, the mind of a conscientious man will be very liable to abandon the design; and thus the very best ministers may be lost to the church.

But if a young man surmounts his doubts and discouragements, and makes his case known to his brethren, he is sometimes treated with cold suspicion, and obstacles are thrown in his way on purpose to test the strength of his zeal. If, at last, by dint of perseverance, he forces the church to give him a license, so much time may have been wasted, that it is too late to enter upon the work with advantage.

There may be cases, too, in which a young man may not have thought of the ministry, who may nevertheless furnish evidence of piety, talents and zeal, which would make him useful as a minister. It is undoubtedly the duty of pastors and Christians to converse with such a person, in a judicious manner; to inquire respecting his feelings; to ask him if it is not his duty to preach the gospel; to urge him to reflect and pray on the subject; to invite him to speak and to pray in conference and prayer meetings, and thus give his mind a direction towards the object. No reason can be given, why it is not as much our duty to use the proper means in this case, as it is to persuade a sinner to be reconciled to God; and God may, in both cases, employ us as instruments to accomplish his will.

We think, brethren, that there has been, and still is, a failure in duty, on this subject, among our churches. We earnestly entreat you to think of these suggestions, and let your attention be more directed to the young men among you. Let not selfishness induce you to detain them from their duty. The cause of God needs ministers. Millions of our fellow men are dying every year, without any one to tell them of the love of Jesus. Let, then, every young man in our churches, inquire, with a prayerful heart, Is it not my duty to preach the gospel? Let every church be a faithful and affectionate nursing mother to the young servants to the Redeemer.

But, brethren, have we not neglected the yet more important duty, to pray for an increase of ministers. While we hold fast the belief, that God alone can call and qualify his true ministers, does not consistency, as wellas piety, require us to offer continual and importunate prayer, that he will bestow on his churches the inestimable gift of faithful pastors and teachers, and commission a sufficient number of evangelists, who may preach the unsearchable riches of Christ in destitute places and in heathen countries? Our Saviour has said, with special emphasis, "*Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*" Let us henceforth pray more for this blessing, and for help to perform the duty which has been insisted on in this tract. Thus may our efforts accompany our prayers, and God, even our own God will bless us, and grant us the desire of our hearts.

BRIEF HISTORY

OF THE

AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSION

IN BURMAH.

In the month of February, 1812, five young men, who had formerly been fellow-students at Andover, sailed from this country to commence a foreign mission under the patronage of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. It was owing to their urgent solicitations and moving appeals, that the churches were aroused, and this first Board of Missions constituted. They sailed for Calcutta with instructions to proceed to Burmah, if it were judged practicable to establish a mission there; and as they were the earliest missionaries from this land, they would of course hasten at once to Serampore, to obtain the sympathies and advice of the venerable men who had so long been laboring in the field. Mr. Judson, who was one of the company, reflected during the voyage, that the Serampore brethren were Baptists; and supposed very naturally, that he might be called, while sharing their hospitalities, to defend the Pedobaptist opinions which he professed. Such anticipations led him to a careful re-examination of the grounds of his faith, and, eventually, to a thorough change in his views. After a very serious and reluctant struggle, Mrs. Judson was compelled by a consciousness of right, and the clear demonstrations of the New Testament, to join her husband. Accordingly, they were both baptized and admitted to the church at Calcutta, September 6th, 1812. Mr. Rice who had sailed in another ship and arrived somewhat later, was the subject, without the slighest concert, of a similar change of feelings, and was baptized in November. This event led naturally to a dissolution of the connexion of Messrs. Judson and Rice with the Board under whose patronage they went out, and threw them upon their own re-

sources, or the event of some new arrangements at home. A spirit of opposition to their enterprize, which manifested itself at Calcutta, and the peremptory refusal of the East India Company to suffer their continuance within their dominions, led the missionaries to embark for the Isle of France. While at this place, Messrs. Judson and Rice thought it expedient that the latter should return at once to this country, and endeavor to awaken a spirit of missions among the Baptist churches.

He accordingly sailed in March, 1813, and was welcomed on his arrival in the United States, with great cordiality and affection. He was soon instrumental in awakening an extensive missionary feeling, and a large number of missionary societies were originated in various parts of the country; and in April, 1814, the Baptist General Convention was formed in Philadelphia.

The will of Providence was, perhaps, never more distinctly intelligible, than in the circumstances which led to the establishment of the American Baptist mission in the Burman empire. Mr. Judson received no encouragement in respect to the station, from his friends at Serampore. The ground had already been tried. But such were the obstructions, resulting from a barbarous nation of idolaters, a despotic government, where change of religion in a native would be visited with death, and a language of difficult acquisition, that all former attempts had failed. The missionaries, few in number, who had been deputed by the Serampore brethren to go thither, had left in discouragement, and gone to other fields. Not a native had listened to the word of eternal life. Of the good seed of the kingdom, none had been sown. After long deliberation as to the course which they should pursue in their present embarrassing and unforeseen condition, Mr. and Mrs. Judson resolved to attempt a mission at Penang or Prince of Wales' Island, situated on the coast of Malacca, and inhabited by Malays. As no passage to that island could be obtained from the Isle of France, they sailed for Madras in May, 1813, with the hope of obtaining a passage thence to Penang. But here

they were disappointed. No passage to that place could be procured. Fearful that the English government in Bengal, would, on learning their arrival, send them to England, they resolved, after a stay at Madras of a few days, to take passage in a vessel bound to Rangoon. Thus by a wonderful series of providential occurences, they were impelled, contrary to their expectations and plans, to the Burman empire; and, amid hazard and discouragement, Mr. Judson resolved, in the name of God, there to set up the Christian banner.

RANGOON.

Mr. Judson arrived at Rangoon in July, 1813. On his arrival, he found a mission-house, occupied by the family of Mr. Felix Carey, which now became his home. Mr. C. soon left the station for an office under government; and thus the mission was abandoned into the hands of the American Baptist Board.

In October, 1816, Mr. and Mrs. Hough joined the mission family at Rangoon, having left the United States the preceding December.

In March, 1817, four years after the commencement of the mission, the first *inquirer* presented himself to Mr. Judson. His appearance and manners excited high hopes; and, at the close of his first visit, the mission family felt, that there was reason to thank God and take courage.

In September, 1818, Messrs. Colman and Wheelock, who had sailed from Boston in November, 1817, were added to the mission family at Rangoon. Mr. Judson had already completed the translation of the gospel by Matthew, and a zayat was built for religious worship, where he sat from day to day, to converse with all who came, on the things of the kingdom. The zayat was erected on a road, lined on both sides with pagodas; and hence called *Pagoda-Road.*

On the 27th of June, 1819, the first baptism occurred in the Burman empire. Moung Nau, the subject of it, gave a most satisfactory and interesting account of his mental exercises, and was admitted, with an unspeakably joyful welcome, to baptism and the church.

This first baptism seemed like the first fruits of a revival. The number of inquirers began to multiply, and at some meetings, especially of the females, the Holy Spirit was evidently present. On the 7th of November following, two more converts were baptized. Individuals of rank and eminence were becoming zealous inquirers, and the holiest anticipations of the missionaries seemed on the point of being realized. But such was their success, that the fame of their operations could not be kept from the ears of the emperor. Fearing the worst temporal consequences, praying for divine guidance, and pursuing what seemed to be the only course expedient, Messrs. Judson and Colman left Rangoon for Ava, the capital of the country, to seek the imperial favor and toleration, and safety for the baptized Burmans. Their petition, however, was disregarded, their hopes were blighted, and they returned to tell the sad tidings to their converts. They had previously arranged that Mr. Colman should go to Chittagong, a place under British protection, so that in case of the worst, all the missionaries might find there an asylum from persecution. They expected, when they disclosed their ill success to the disciples, that they would be filled with apprehensions, and perhaps be ready to renounce their Christian profession. But, on the contrary, they remained steadfast in the faith, and seemed willing that the will of the Lord should be done. "Only stay with us," they exclaimed, "till there are ten converts; then one can teach the rest; and the emperor himself will not be able to destroy the new religion."

Mr. Colman shortly after went to Chittagong. Mr. Wheelock, whose health soon failed, died on his passage to Bengal, whither he was going for medical aid. Mr. Hough was at Serampore, superintending the printing of a Burman tract. Mrs. Judson's health had become so impaired, that a voyage to Calcutta became indispensable. And so feeble was she before the time for her departure arrived, that Mr. Judson felt it necessary that he should accompany her. Thus the station must be left awhile without a missionary —the dependant sheep, led by no earthly shepherd

But through the tender mercy of God, before the ship could get away, seven more Burmans gave satisfactory evidence of a change of heart, and applied for baptism. They were accepted by the church, and added to the little band of believers; so that the proposed *ten* was now filled.

While at Calcutta, Mrs. Judson's health gradually recovered, and she returned to Rangoon with her husband, in January, 1821. Soon after their return, another convert was baptized, Moung Ing, who is now a native pastor. During the absence of the missionaries, he had been endeavoring to spread among his friends the knowledge of a crucified Saviour.

In November, 1821, Dr. Price, with his family, arrived to join the mission. Just as he landed, Mrs. Judson, in consequence of returning illness, was forced to leave all the endearments of that land of her affections, and return to America. She proceeded by the way of England. Having visited different sections of this country, and spent the winter at Baltimore, where she prepared for the press a history of the Burman mission, her health was so far recovered that she was able to return to Rangoon the following summer. After being instrumental in thus enlisting many affections in the Burman mission, both at home and in England, she sailed again for India. She was accompanied in her return by Mr. and Mrs. Wade, who were appointed to join the station at Rangoon. They sailed from Boston in June, and arrived at Calcutta, October 19th; soon after which they sailed for their final destination.

Ava. As the history of the station at Ava forms a kind of episode in the history of that at Rangoon, this seems to be the fittest place for its introduction. Soon after the arrival of Dr. Price, intelligence of his medical skill was conveyed to the capital. He was immediately summoned to wait on the emperor. Hoping that a favorable opportunity might now open for the introduction of the gospel into the heart of the realm, Mr. Judson resolved to accompany the Doctor. Government-boats were furnished at the public expense, and they were received with respect and kind-

ness. Upon their arrival, Dr. Price was authorized to build himself a house, where he might live on terms of familiarity with the public officers, and in the enjoyment of perfect toleration. Until the country was thrown into a state of commotion, he was able indirectly to advance the objects of his mission. His medical skill rendered him an object of favor and respect, and it was fondly hoped, that, in this golden* city, the grand point of attraction to the Burman empire, the church of Christ was about to be established on a basis which could not be shaken.

But events were destined soon to occur, which nipped the hopes of Christians in the bud. A war between the British and Burmese governments commenced about this period, which rendered the missionaries objects of suspicion and ill will. Because their language was the same, and their pecuniary affairs were transacted through British agents, they were imagined to be spies for England. As the armies of the East India Company advanced from town to town, Messrs. Judson and Price were seized and imprisoned, and treated with the utmost severity. For a year and seven months, they were held in confinement; often driven by savage persecutors from prison to prison; immured in the death-prison, and saved from a violent death only by the interposition of a friendly Governor, and the constant intercessions of Mrs. Judson.

A few passages are extracted from Mrs. Judson's narrative of the scenes through which the missionaries passed during the war.†

"On the 8th of June, just as we were preparing for dinner, in rushed an officer, holding a black book,

* When anything belonging to the emperor is mentioned, the epithet "golden" is attached to it. When he is said to have heard anything, "it has reached the golden ears;" a person admitted to his presence "has been at the golden feet;" the perfume of roses is described as grateful to "the golden nose."

† For a detailed account of these events, the reader is referred to the Memoir of Mrs. Judson, where will be found an extended history of appalling sufferings, every sentence of which possesses the most intense and thrilling interest.

with a dozen Burmans, accompanied by *one*, whom, from his spotted face, we knew to be an executioner, and a 'son of the prison.' 'Where is the teacher?' was the first inquiry. Mr. Judson presented himself. 'You are called by the King,' said the officer; a form of speech always used when about to arrest a criminal. The spotted man instantly seized Mr. Judson, threw him on the floor, and produced the small cord, the instrument of torture. I caught hold of his arm; 'Stay, (said I,) I will give you money.' 'Take her too,' said the officer; 'she also is a foreigner.' Mr. Judson, with an imploring look, begged they would let me remain till further orders. The scene was now shocking beyond description. The whole neighborhood had collected—the little Burman children were screaming and crying—the Bengalee servants stood in amazement at the indignities offered their master—and the hardened executioner, with a kind of hellish joy, drew tight the cords, bound Mr. Judson fast, and dragged him off I knew not whither. In vain I begged and entreated the spotted face to take the silver, and loosen the ropes; but he spurned my offers, and immediately departed. I gave the money, however, to Moung Ing to follow after, and make some further attempt to mitigate the torture of Mr. Judson; but instead of relieving their prisoner, when a few rods from the house, the unfeeling wretches again threw him on the ground, and drew the cords still tighter, so as almost to prevent respiration.

"The officer and his gang proceeded on to the court-house, where the Governor of the city and officers were collected, one of whom read the order of the King, to commit Mr. Judson to the death-prison into which he was soon hurled, the door closed—and Moung Ing saw no more. What a night was now before me! I retired into my room, and endeavored to obtain consolation from committing my case to God, and imploring fortitude and strength to suffer whatever awaited me. But the consolation of retirement was not long allowed me, for the magistrate of the place had come into the verandah, and continually called me to come out, and submit to his examination.

I did so, and he inquired very minutely of everything I knew; then ordered the gates of the compound to be shut, no person to be allowed to go in or out, placed a guard of ten ruffians, to whom he gave a strict charge to keep me safe, and departed.

"It was now dark. I retired to an inner room with my four little Burman girls, and barred the doors. The guard instantly ordered me to unbar the doors and come out, or they would break the house down, and seemed resolved to annoy me as much as possible. My unprotected, desolate state, my entire uncertainty of the fate of Mr. Judson, and the dreadful carousings and almost diabolical language of the guard, all conspired to make it by far the most distressing night I had ever passed. You may well imagine, my dear brother, that sleep was a stranger to my eyes, and peace and composure to my mind.

"The next morning, I sent Moung Ing to ascertain the situation of your brother, and give him food, if still living. He soon returned with the intelligence that Mr. Judson, and all the white foreigners, were confined in the *death prison*, with three pairs of iron fetters each, and fastened to a long pole, to prevent their moving! The point of my anguish now was, that I was a prisoner myself, and could make no efforts for the release of the missionaries. I begged and entreated the magistrate to allow me to go to some member of government to state my case; but he said he did not dare to consent, for fear I should make my escape. I next wrote a note to one of the King's sisters, with whom I had been intimate, requesting her to use her influence for the release of the teachers. The note was returned with this message—She 'did not understand it,'—which was a polite refusal to interfere; though I afterwards ascertained that she had an anxious desire to assist us, but dared not on account of the Queen. The day dragged heavily away, and another dreadful night was before me. I endeavored to soften the feelings of the guard, by giving them tea and segars for the night; so that they allowed me to remain inside of my room, without threatening as they did the night before. But the idea of

your brother being stretched on the bare floor in irons and confinement, haunted my mind like a spectre, and prevented my obtaining any quiet sleep, though nature was almost exhausted.

"On the third day, I sent a message to the Governor of the city, who has the entire direction of prison affairs, to allow me to visit him with a present. This had the desired effect; and he immediately sent orders to the guards, to permit my going into town. The Governor received me pleasantly, and asked me what I wanted. I stated to him the situation of the foreigners, and particularly that of the teachers, who were Americans, and had nothing to do with the war. He told me it was not in his power to release them from prison or irons, but that he could make their situation more comfortable; there was his head officer, with whom I must consult, relative to the means. The officer, who proved to be one of the city writers, and whose countenance at the first glance presented the most perfect assemblage of all the evil passions attached to human nature, took me aside, and endeavored, to convince me, that myself, as well as the prisoners, was entirely at his disposal—that our future comfort must depend on my liberality in regard to presents—and that these must be made in a private way, and unknown to any officer in the government! What must I do, said I, to obtain a mitigation of the present sufferings of the two teachers? 'Pay to me,' said he, 'two hundred tickals, (about a hundred dollars,) two pieces of fine cloth, and two pieces of handkerchiefs.' I had taken money with me in the morning, our house being two miles from the prison—I could not easily return. This I offered to the writer, and begged he would not insist on the other articles, as they were not in my possession. He hesitated for sometime, but fearing to lose the sight of so much money, he concluded to take it, promising to relieve the teachers from their most painful situation.

"I then procured an order from the Governor for my admittance into prison; but the sensations produced by meeting your brother in that *wretched, horrid* situation, and the affecting scene which ensued, I

will not attempt to describe. Mr Judson crawled to the door of the prison—for I was not allowed to enter—gave me some directions relative to his release; but before we could make any arrangement, I was ordered to depart, by those iron-hearted jailers, who could not endure to see us enjoy the poor consolation of meeting in that miserable place. In vain I pleaded the order from the Governor for my admittance; they again harshly repeated, 'Depart, or we will pull you out.' The same evening, the missionaries, together with the other foreigners, who paid an equal sum, were taken out of the common prison, and confined in an open shed in the prison enclosure. Here I was allowed to send them food, and mats to sleep on; but was not permitted to enter again for several days."

Mrs. Judson was now continually annoyed and terrified by the movements of government and petty officers; the mission-house was searched by official order, and its contents confiscated, though not all removed. For several succeeding months, she was unwearied in her efforts to procure the release of her husband and Dr. Price, to supply them with food, to effect a mitigation of their sufferings, or a reprieve from immediate execution. The birth of a daughter during this distracting period, adds an interest to the events which needs no comment.

"During these seven months, the continual extortions and oppressions to which your brother, and the other white prisoners were subject, are indescribable. Sometimes sums of money were demanded, sometimes pieces of cloth, and handkerchiefs; at other times, an order would be issued that the white foreigners should not speak to each other, or have any communication with their friends without. Then, again, the servants were forbidden to carry in their food, without an extra fee. Sometimes, for days and days together, I could not go into the prison till after dark, when I had two miles to walk, in returning to the house. O how many, many times, have I returned from that dreary prison at nine o'clock at night, solitary and worn out with fatigue and anxiety, and endeavored to

invent some new scheme for the release of the prisoners. Sometimes, for a moment or two, my thoughts would glance toward America, and my beloved friends there—but for nearly a year and a half, so entirely engrossed was every thought with present scenes and sufferings, that I seldom reflected on a single occurrence of my former life, or recollected that I had a friend in existence out of Ava.

"You, my dear brother, can judge from the above circumstances, how intense were my sufferings. But the point, the acme of my distress, consisted in the awful uncertainty of our final fate. My prevailing opinion was, that my husband would suffer violent death; and that I should, of course, become a slave, and languish out a miserable, though short existence, in the tyrannic hands of some unfeeling monster. But the consolations of religion, in these trying circumstances, were neither 'few nor small.' It taught me to look beyond this world, to that rest, that peaceful, happy rest, where Jesus reigns, and oppression never enters.

Sometimes Mrs. J. procured for the prisoners a partial relief, but it was only temporary, and then some fresh instance of oppression would occur, renewing her most fearful apprehensions. Such an instance is narrated below. She had been permitted to make for Mr. J. a little bamboo room in the prison enclosures, where he was allowed to spend portions of his time, and she could occasionally sit with him. One morning he "sent me word that he and all the white prisoners were put into the inner prison, in five pairs of fetters each, that his little room had been torn down, and his mat, pillow, &c. been taken by the jailers. This was to me a dreadful shock, as I thought at once it was only a prelude to greater evils.

"I was determined to see the Governor, and know the cause of this additional oppression; and for this purpose returned into town the same evening, at an hour I knew he would be at home. He was in his audience room, and, as I entered, looked up without speaking, but exhibited a mixture of shame and af-

fected anger in his countenance. I began by saying, Your Lordship has hitherto treated us with the kindness of a father. Our obligations to you are very great. We have looked to you for protection from oppression and cruelty. You have in many instances mitigated the sufferings of those unfortunate, though innocent beings committed to your charge. You have promised me particularly, that you would stand by me to the last, and though you should receive an order from the king, you would not put Mr. J. to death. What crime has he committed to deserve such additional punishment? The old man's hard heart was melted, for he wept like a child. 'I pity you, Tsa-yar-ga-dau, (a name by which he always called me) I knew you would make me feel; I therefore forbade your application. But you must believe me when I say, I do not wish to increase the sufferings of the prisoners. When I am ordered to execute them, the least that I can do is, to put them out of sight. I will now tell you (continued he) what I have never told you before, that three times I have received intimations from the Queen's brother, to assassinate all the white prisoners privately; but I would not do it. And I now repeat it, though I execute all the others, I will never execute your husband. But I cannot release him from his present confinement, and you must not ask it.' I had never seen him manifest so much feeling, or so resolute in denying me a favor; which circumstance was an additional reason for thinking dreadful scenes were before us.

"The situation of the prisoners was now distressing beyond description. It was at the commencement of the hot season. There were above a hundred prisoners shut up in one room, without a breath of air, excepting from the cracks in the boards. I sometimes obtained permission to go to the door for five minutes, when my heart sickened at the wretchedness exhibited. The white prisoners, from incessant perspiration and loss of appetite, looked more like the dead than the living. I made daily applications to the Governor, offering him money, which he refused,

but all that I gained, was permission for the foreigners to eat their food outside, and this continued but a short time.

"After continuing in the inner prison for more than a month, your brother was taken with a fever. I felt assured he would not live long, unless removed from that noisome place. The Governor, being worn out with my entreaties, at length gave me the order in an official form, to take Mr. J. out of the large prison, and place him in a more comfortable situation; and also gave orders to the head jailer, to allow me to go in and out, all times of the day, to administer medicines, &c. I now felt happy indeed, and had Mr. J. instantly removed into a little bamboo hovel, so low that neither of us could stand upright—but a palace in comparison with the place he had left."

Again she says, "I used to carry Mr. J.'s food myself, for the sake of getting in, and would then remain an hour or two, unless driven out. We had been in this comfortable situation but two or three days, when one morning, having carried in Mr. Judson's breakfast, which, in consequence of fever, he was unable to take, I remained longer than usual, when the Governor in great haste sent for me. I promised him to return as soon as I had ascertained the Governor's will, he being much alarmed at this unusual message. I was very agreeably disappointed, when the Governor informed me that he only wished to consult me about his watch, and seemed unusually pleasant and conversable. I found afterwards that his only object was to detain me until the dreadful scene about to take place in the prison, was over. For when I left him to go to my room, one of the servants came running, and with a ghastly countenance, informed me that all the white prisoners were carried away."

After several hours of agonizing suspense, she learned their destination, and resolved to follow them. The Governor, who commiserated her condition, said to her, "'You can do nothing more for your husband, *take care of yourself.*' With a heavy heart I went to my room, and having no hope to excite me to exertion, I sunk down almost in despair. For several

days previous, I had been actively engaged in building my own little room, and making our hovel comfortable. My thoughts had been almost entirely occupied in contriving means to get into prison. But now I looked towards the gate with a kind of melancholy feeling, but no wish to enter. All was the stillness of death, no preparation of your brother's food, no expectation of meeting him at the usual dinner hour, all my employment, all my occupations seemed to have ceased, and I had nothing left but the dreadful recollection that Mr. Judson was carried off, I knew not whither. It was one of the most insupportable days I ever passed."

After a distressing ride the next day, with her infant in her arms, she reached "that never to be forgotten place, Oung-pen-la." There she found the white prisoners; but it were vain to attempt a sketch of the agonies under which they had been goaded thither by iron-hearted monsters. For these particulars, as well as a narrative of a six months' residence at that place, the reader is referred to Mrs. Judson's Memoir. Her own personal, bodily distresses were seemingly beyond human endurance; for amidst privations, toils, and dangers, she was seized with an illness which continued more than two months, during which, a Bengalee male servant was the only attendant for herself, her sick child, and Mr. J., who was likewise ill in prison. At length, the Burmese government, alarmed by the rapid approach of the English army toward the "golden city," sent an order for Mr. J.'s release and instant removal to the camp, that he might negociate a peace. This, after considerable delay, was effected; and one condition of it being an immediate discharge of all the foreigners held in confinement by his Burman Majesty, the missionaries were set at liberty, and placed under British protection.

One additional fact illustrative of the savage spirit by which those were actuated, on whose tender mercies the missionaries were dependent, and exhibiting the protecting care of an over-ruling Providence, must not be omitted.

Sometime after their arrival at Oung-pen-la, they learned that the white foreigners had been sent there for the express purpose of being sacrificed. An officer who had just come into favor with the Emperor, had ordered this, and it was only delayed that he might be present to witness the horrid scene. But while he was preparing an army to march against the English, he was suspected of high treason, and instantly executed, without the least examination.

Missionary efforts throughout the country were suspended for a long and gloomy period; and if the God of missions were not the wise and glorious governor of the universe, accomplishing his own purposes in the most mysterious ways, this might have seemed the death-blow of our efforts in that region. After the war, Dr. Price remained at Ava. Here he had under his instruction the sons of some of the highest officers of government. His journals narrate several interesting conversations with the young princes. He lectured to them on various branches of natural philosophy, and intermingled and deduced arguments and reasons for the religion of the Bible. But in the midst of his usefulness, God saw fit to take him from the service of earth to the purer and holier services of heaven. He died, near Ava, in February, 1828. The station was not resumed till April, 1833, when Rev. E. Kincaid left Rangoon for that place.

At the commencement of the war, Messrs. Wade and Hough, the only missionaries at Rangoon, were ordered to execution; and their lives were saved only by the cowardice of their Burman oppressors. When they were liberated by the advance of the British army, they sailed immediately for Calcutta, to await the course of events. During this interval in their work, Mr. Wade superintended the printing of a Burman dictionary, prepared chiefly by Mr. Judson; and thus accomplished an invaluable service for future missionaries.

After an absence of two years and three months, the missionaries returned to Rangoon. Some of the disciples were dead; and of some, no news could be obtained. A few were anxiously waiting to know the

plans of their spiritual leaders, designing wherever they should go, to go with them. None, it is believed, had apostatized from the steadfastness of their faith.

In consequence of the arrangements of the British government, it was thought proper to leave the station at Rangoon for a while, and establish one in its stead at Amherst, to which a large proportion of the population had removed. It was supposed this town would become the capital of the Company's possessions gained by the war. Schools were here established, which began to give much encouragement—especially the school for girls, under the care of Mrs. Wade. But the British garrison was eventually removed to Maulmein, and the town of Amherst suffered to decay. The population gradually retired, and finally, the missionaries also—regretting the change most of all, because it removed them from the place where rest the ashes of Mrs. Judson, and from which, in October, 1826, her spirit ascended to the Redeemer.

Mr. Judson, at the time of her death, was at Ava, whither he had accompanied an Embassy from the English Government. He thus writes of Mrs. J's. death to her mother:

"I left your daughter, my beloved wife, at Amherst, the 5th of July last, in good health, comfortably situated, happy in being out of the reach of our savage oppressors, and animated in prospect of a field of missionary labor opening under the auspices of British protection. It affords me some comfort, that she not only consented to my leaving her, for the purpose of joining the present embassy to Ava, but uniformly gave her advice in favor of the measure, whenever I hesitated concerning my duty. Accordingly, I left her. After my arrival at Ava, I received several letters from her, written in her usual style, and exhibiting no subject of regret or apprehension, except the declining health of our little daughter Maria."

After mentioning a letter from the English Superintendant at Amherst, which, though it spoke of Mrs. Judson's being slightly ill, was yet of such a tenor as to make his "mind quite at ease, both as it regarded

the mother and the child," he says :—"My next communication was a letter with a black seal, handed me by a person, saying he was sorry to inform me of the death of the child. I know not whether this was a mistake on his part, or kindly intended to prepare my mind for the real intelligence. I went into my room, and opened the letter with feelings of gratitude and joy, that at any rate the mother was spared. It was from Mr. B——, Assistant Superintendant of Amherst, dated the 26th of October, and began thus :

"'My dear Sir, to one who has suffered so much, and with such exemplary fortitude, there needs but little preface to tell a tale of distress. It were cruel indeed to torture you with doubt and suspense. To sum up the unhappy tidings in a few words—*Mrs. Judson is no more.*'

"At intervals, I got through with the dreadful letter—"

The subjoined particulars, are from a subsequent letter to the same person, after his return to Amherst.

"I have been on a visit to the physician who attended her in her illness. I am now convinced that everything possible was done; and that had I been present myself, I could not have essentially contributed to avert the fatal termination of the disease. He says, that from the first attack of the fever, she was persuaded she should not recover; but that her mind was uniformly tranquil and happy in the prospect of death. She only expressed occasional regret at leaving her child, the native Christians, and the schools, before her husband or another missionary family could arrive. The last two days she was free from pain. On her attention being roused by reiterated questions, she replied, 'I feel quite well, only very weak.' These were her last words.

"The doctor is decidedly of opinion that the fatal termination of the fever is to be ascribed to the weakness of her constitution, occasioned by severe privations and long protracted sufferings which she endured at Ava. Oh, with what meekness, patience, magnanimity, and Christian fortitude, she bore those suffer-

ings! And can I wish they had been less? Can I sacrilegiously wish to rob her crown of a single gem?"

Moung Thah-a, a native convert, commenced preaching at Rangoon, after the war, and several persons were converted. The missionaries at Maulmein were so well satisfied with his character and qualifications, that they ordained him, in January, 1829, pastor of the Rangoon native church. His success has been very pleasing. During the year 1831, seven new converts were baptized, and the state of religion became more interesting. On the arrival of Mr. J. T. Jones, in Feb. 1831, the station was again taken under the charge of our missionaries, and the native preachers labored under their direction. Mr. Jones or Mr. Judson, for a considerable time, supplied the station, and gave away daily a large amount of tracts.

The effects already produced, and which, with the blessing of God, are likely to follow a free circulation of these and corresponding publications, may be imagined from the following facts, selected from many reported in the journals of the missionaries. Mr. Kincaid says, June 28, 1832, "Within this immediate district, there are many inquirers; and for four weeks, I have had many visitors from the interior of the country. By these individuals, I learn that in many places, there is considerable excitement about the new religion, and that this excitement has been produced by reading the tracts and portions of the Scripture, which have been carried away by persons visiting this city. One person from Thong-oo, about 200 miles from this, has come for the purpose of knowing what he shall do to be saved. His eyes are open, and he is filled with admiration and love. He is one of the government men in that city, and a person of superior understanding. He says he knows many there, who are convinced that this is the true religion. Some time since, Moung En visited Pegu and a number of the villages in the district, preaching and distributing tracts. He related that many listened and some disputed. An inquirer from Pantenau, three or four days'

distance, called on me. He has read the 'View of the Christian Religion' and the 'Golden Balance,' and gives some evidence of a saving change."

"In Rangoon," says Mr. Jones, "the native teacher who goes about the city from day to day, stated that the number of those who believe in the Eternal God and secretly pray to him, is not small. Through fear of their rulers, they are not yet prepared openly to avow their attachment to the truth. They make no offerings to the priests, nor prostrate themselves at the pagodas; which nevertheless, they occasionally visit, to avoid the reproach of their acquaintances."

Even the Viceroy, for a time, seemed no way opposed to the operations of the brethren. Two of them called on him, and were received with distinguished kindness. They presented the Catechism of Geography and Astronomy, the Chronological Table, and a map of the world prepared in Burman, which he examined with lively interest, and asked many questions. "The remarks which he made concerning different places and the Christian Religion," says Mr. Wade, "evinced the knowledge he had obtained of these subjects, and proved that he had read much in the books which have been circulated among the people." The missionaries, however, do not place an undue estimate on this branch of labor, nor propose for a moment to make a substitute of it, for preaching the gospel. The number of the church up to the latest date (1833) is forty-two.

MAULMEIN.

When the town of Amherst was abandoned, the British soldiers and a large number of natives removed to this place. Mr. and Mrs. Boardman, who sailed from America in July, 1825, established themselves here in the summer of 1827, and remained for a while alone. Several persons listened with attention, and a flourishing school was commenced for boys. The school for girls at Amherst had excited so much interest, that eleven of them—more than half—removed thence to Maulmein. Among the members of this

school was Mee-Shway-ee, whose memoir has been published in this country,* and deserves a place among the most precious of our monuments of juvenile piety.

As Maulmein is the station of the British soldiery, it has become also the most prominent point of the operations of the mission. It is marked in missionary history, as a heathen town, which has been blessed with a revival of religion. The female school has been particularly distinguished; and a number of the scholars have been baptized. The whole number of baptisms, from January, 1828, to March, 1830, was sixty-two. During the year 1831, one hundred and thirty-six persons were baptized at this station.

The revival at Maulmein was largely shared by the British soldiers. They presented so interesting a field of labor, that Mr. Kincaid, on his arrival in November, 1830, assumed the task of preaching to them, and afterwards became the pastor of the church in the army. It was thought expedient to make this band of believers a separate church from the native converts. Before the detachment left the place, the church numbered one hundred and thirteen members; eighty-nine of whom were added during the year 1831.

In the region around Maulmein are several villages of Karens—a people who will be more particularly noticed under the next head. In an excursion of six weeks among them early in 1832, Mr. Judson baptized twenty-five converts. During the year embraced in the Report of the Board for 1833, sixty-six were admitted by baptism—bringing up the number of the Karen church attached to this station to seventy-seven. Eight were also added to the native church at Maulmein. The total number of members in the three churches at this place, in 1833, was four hundred and six.

This is the seat of the printing-establishment, where Messrs. Bennett, Cutter and Hancock assiduously labor to prepare tracts and portions of scripture for distribution. This is also Mr. Judson's principal residence, where he is devoting himself to the completion

* This interesting Memoir is No. 70 in the series of tracts published by the Baptist General Tract Society.

of his translation of the Bible. It is hoped it will be finished in May, 1834. An account of the employment of the press will be given in a subsequent page, under the head PRINTING.

TAVOY—KARENS.

By recommendation of the Board, and the advice of the brethren at Maulmein, Mr. and Mrs. Boardman commenced a station at Tavoy, in April, 1828. They were accompained by two native Christians, of whom one was a Karen, approved by the church, but not baptized, till his arrival at Tavoy.

Mr. B. had no sooner arrived, than information was brought him of the Karens, a race of people who reside at some distance from Tavoy. He was assured that they would embrace the Christian religion, and invited to visit them. Their language differs from the Burman. In some of their characteristics, they resemble the North American Indians

The Karens have now become the chief attraction at Tavoy. When Mr. Boardman visited them, he found them an exceedingly honest and devout people. They had among them a sorcerer or priest who had in his possession a book, to which they all paid religious worship. It was left among them some years previous by an individual, who enjoined upon them several superstitious observances, and this among the rest. It had been for twelve years, the chief object of their curiosity to find out the contents of this book. On hearing of the arrival of Mr. B. at Tavoy, they supposed he must be the teacher, a belief in whose coming had been the chief article of their creed, and who, they expected, could explain the book. Too impatient to wait till the rains were over, and Mr. B. could go to them, they sent a deputation to him, a distance of three days' journey, with the sorcerer and his book at their head. After unwrapping it in Mr. B.'s presence, with great veneration, they presented it to him. It was an English prayer book. He immediately told them it was a good book—that they must worship not the book itself, but the God of whom it spoke. Through the Karen Christian, who accompanied him from Maulmein, he was able to converse

much with them on religious things. They listened with great interest, and urged him to visit them, which he did as soon as was practicable.

This incident has led to the developement of the most encouraging, important, and laborious branch of the Burman mission. Several visits have been made among the Karens, which have been invariably marked by a happy issue, and an astonishing spirit of inquiry has been awakened among them.

A church was soon formed at Tavoy, consisting of ten members, of whom seven were Karens, and one the head man of a village.

When the station was assuming an air of the highest interest, the intense labors of Mr. and Mrs. B. had so impaired their health, that they were obliged to leave, for a while, and retire to Maulmein. But the Karen converts, in the mean while, were not inactive. "Their manner," says Mrs. Boardman, "has been such as to remind us forcibly of what we read respecting the Apostles and primitive Christians. The chief, Moung So, and Moung Kyah, have taken such parts of the Scriptures as we could give them, and gone from house to house, and village to village, expounding the word, exhorting the people, and uniting with their exertions, frequent and fervent prayers." Such a course of means, steadily pursued, served to water the seed sown, and cause it to vegetate and spring up, and bear the harvest which Mr. B. on his return, was allowed to gather in.

It was not till December, 1830, after an absence of seven months, that he resumed his labors, and then under the pressure of great weakness. He took with him Ko-Ing, an ordained preacher, and Ko-Thah-byoo. No sooner had he reached Tavoy, than his faithful Karens gathered about him from the country, bringing with them many who gave evidence of true conversion to God, and wished for baptism. Successive days were spent in a scrupulous examination of the candidates, and in the course of six weeks the best satisfaction was obtained of twenty-three, who were admitted to the rite. While Mr. B. was filled with joy in beholding such trophies of redeeming love, in

telligence was brought, that a far greater number in remote villages, which he had formerly visited, had obtained like precious faith, and were desirous to give the same proof of their attachment to Christ, but were unable to come to town. On receiving this information, together with an urgent request that he would without delay come to them, he consented, though he was at the time so exhausted by sickness as to be unable to ride or walk. A zayat was prepared for him at a distance of three days' journey, and everything was made ready for him to commence the undertaking. It was at this juncture, so interesting and important, that Mr. Mason arrived. Nothing could be more in time, if we consider all the circumstances which followed.—Nothing could be more refreshing to Mr. Boardman than the countenance of a brother, sinking as he was under accumulated weakness, and with so great a work just before him—a brother with whom he might intrust those sheep in the wilderness, for whom he had cherished so great solicitude, and from whom it was plain he must soon be taken.

Mr. Mason, on first seeing the emaciated form of Mr. Boardman, hesitated respecting his contemplated journey; but when he perceived the ardor of his soul, and how much his heart was set on accomplishing the work proposed, he forbore all objections, and resolved to accompany him. On the 31st of January, 1831, they started, Mrs. B. in company, and Mr. B. borne on a cot.

After three days, they reached the place, without any very sensible exhaustion. "During our stay, however," says Mr. Mason, "he so evidently lost strength, that Mrs. B. on one occasion advised him to return; to which he replied with more than common animation, 'The cause of God is of more importance than my health, and if I return now, our whole object will be defeated—I want to see the work of the Lord go on.' Wednesday morning, it was apparent," says Mr. Mason, "that death was near. He consented, provided the examination and baptism of the candidates could that day be completed, to return.

Accordingly, a little before sunset, he was carried out in his bed to the water side, where, lifting his languid head to gaze on the gratifying scene, I had the pleasure to baptize in his presence thirty-four individuals, who gave satisfactory evidence to all, that they had passed from death unto life." He was so much exhausted that he could scarcely breathe. But his soul was in perfect peace. When the baptism was over, he said 'I feel now that I am done, and am ready to depart, and can say from my heart, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.'

On the second day of his return, it was concluded, with his approbation, to take him in a boat down a stream which was near.

"At about 12 o'clock," says Mrs. B. "the boat was ready, and only a few steps from the house. The Karens carried out Mr. Boardman first—and as the shore was muddy, I was obliged to wait till they could put him into the boat. They then took me immediately to him; but O, what was the agony of my soul when I saw that the hand of death was on him. I spoke to him, but he made no answer, though I fancied that he tried to move his lips. Without a struggle or a sigh, he breathed out his happy spirit into the presence of his Redeemer, with the faithful Karens kneeling around him in prayer."

Mr. Mason returned to Tavoy, and took charge of the station. About forty individuals have since been added to the church—most of them Karens, and residing in nine or ten different villages. The whole number baptized at Tavoy, during the year 1831, was ninety-six.

Early in January, 1832, Mr. Mason set out again for the Karen country, and was absent about two months. Our limits will only allow us to report some of the closing events. After travelling over several very difficult passes in mountains, in pursuit of those who had not heard the gospel, and distributing many tracts, he returned to the well-known village of Moung-So, late in February, when he writes,—"I cry no longer 'the norrors of heathenism,' but the 'blessings of missions!' I date no longer from a heathen land. Heathenism has

fied these banks. I look on fields cultivated by Christians, and see no dwellings but those inhabited by Christian families. When brother Boardman visited this people, three years ago, they were worshipping demons, and in the practice of all the vices connected with universal darkness; but he preached to them the gospel, 'with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;' and behold, all things have become new!" Here, the converts from the adjacent country gathered around Mr. Mason, and a course of examination for baptism began, which terminated the third day with the admission of twenty-seven. Many of these dated their Christian experience ten or twelve months back, and some even more,—affording to their pious acquaintances and others, the best opportunity of determining the sincerity of their profession.

Mrs. Boardman, says, "most of them live two or three days' journey distant; but, by their frequent visits to us, over almost impassable mountains, and through deserts, the haunt of the tiger, evince a love for the gospel seldom surpassed. What would the Christians in America think of travelling forty or fifty miles on foot, to hear a sermon and beg a Christian book? A good Christian woman, who has been living with us several months, told me that when she came, the water was so deep that she was obliged to wait till the men in the company could cut down trees, and lay across the streams for her to get over on; and sometimes she forded the streams. The reason of their coming at so bad a time was, we had appointed a church fast, and sent to the Karen Christians living near, to unite with us; but a rumor of it spread beyond the mountains, and they were so afraid that they should not observe it *at the right time* and *in the right way*, that a large company of the best disciples came immediately to inquire about it. As far as we can learn, they manifest the same tenderness of conscience and fear of doing wrong, on every subject; and I can say with truth, that the more we become acquainted with them, the more reason we find to love them as Christians, and to believe that the work is of God. Some of them have lived on our premises month after month,

and their conduct has been most exemplary; and we have not heard of an instance of immorality among any of the church members during the past year."

The Karen disciples manifest a truly missionary spirit. They had heard by report, that some of their kinsmen according to the flesh, dwelt in Siam, who had never heard the name of Jesus. They knew nothing of the purpose of our missionaries to form a station in Siam, nor of Mr. Mason's wish to visit the Siamese Karens. But when he began to make inquiries preparatory to such a tour, he found he was anticipated. Several had already gone to proclaim to them the glad tidings of the gospel.

The spirit of inquiry among the Karens around Tavoy seems not at all diminished. On the contrary, deputations and appeals are often sent from a long distance in the interior, entreating the missionaries to send one of their number to make known to them the way of life.

MERGUI.

In October, 1831, Mr. and Mrs. Wade, by the advice of the brethren, made a visit to Mergui, and tarried little more than five months. On arriving, Mr. W. found the inhabitants were numerous, and made up of Burmans, Chinese, Portuguese, Mussulmans, &c. He was received by Mr. Maingy, the civil commissioner, with kindness, and a place of residence was assigned him; but on commencing his labors, he found few at first who were disposed to hear his message, or receive his books. He took a zayat, which he occupied a part of each day, and received those who called for conversation. He had the satisfaction to perceive an increasing attention on the part of the people, from week to week, and a growing desire for books, till, on some occasions, he gave away from thirty to one hundred and fifty a day. A spirit of inquiry was also awakened, which resulted in the hopeful conversion of several individuals. Early in his visit, he was found by certain Karens from the neighboring jungle, and earnestly solicited to go to them; and having obtained the assistance of Ko-Ing, a native preacher from Tavoy, and Ko-Manpoke, from Maulmein, he

readily consented. He was received by them with all readiness, as other brethren have been in other villages of that interesting people. During his stay of two weeks, multitudes of them heard the gospel, and lasting impressions appeared to be produced on the minds of the principal chief and of some of his adherents. Before leaving Mergui in March, Mr. Wade deemed it his duty to regard the request of several applicants for baptism; and, on mature examination, five were admitted. After the administration of the sacred ordinance, the new converts, and such other native disciples as determined to remain, were embodied as a church of Christ, and Ko-Ing appointed to be their pastor.

The efforts of Mrs. Wade during the time, in school teaching, will be reported most satisfactorily in her own language. She says, "When we went to Mergui, not expecting to remain in the place many months, it was not thought expedient to incur the expense of building a school-house; but I found twelve or fourteen girls and women, who were willing to learn to read, with the assistance of a father or brother at home, and come to me for recitation and religious instruction nearly every day. Two of this number learned to read, and committed the catechism and short prayers; another had just begun to read; four others, who had before learned, made good proficiency in committing select portions of Scripture, prayers, &c., (three of this number were from sister Boardman's school at Tavoy,) and three others had nearly finished the elementary lessons. These ten promise to continue their studies, though we are removed from them. This is all I was able to do in the way of schools, during our stay at Mergui. We are encouraged, however, in reflecting that the last great day may show that even this feeble effort was not entirely in vain; for the first woman, soon after beginning to learn, appeared serious, attended family worship and daily instructions, and was the first baptized. Two other individuals also gave some evidence of piety, and earnestly requested baptism. But, for the present, it was thought best to defer it.

SCHOOLS.

Feeling the importance of implanting the principles of religion in the minds of children, schools have been regarded by the Board from the beginning as among the most important objects. But the number of laborers in Burmah is so few, and their cares so pressing, that other occupations more strictly connected with *preaching the gospel*, have attracted their attention. Schools, however, have not been neglected, nor have they been useless. Their establishment was a favorite object with Mrs. Judson ; and, except at Rangoon, no station has been formed where there was not a school in connexion.

At Ava, Dr. Price instructed the young princes. At Amherst, before the station was relinquished, a female school had already begun to diffuse light and holiness. And it was in Mrs. Wade's female school at Maulmein, that the first openings were visible of that revival, which resulted in the addition of many redeemed sinners to the church of God.

Although the early circumstances of the mission prevented the establishment of a school at Rangoon, at the beginning, yet an attempt has been made. In August, 1831, Mr. Jones took preparatory measures for the instruction of children born in the country, whether wholly or partially of Burman descent. Religion was regarded as a prime object in the system of instruction, and much interest was taken both by the missionaries and the parents of the children, in the two schools of Mr. and Mrs. Jones. On their departure for Siam, the schools fell into the hands of Mr. Kincaid ; and we grieve to say, that a letter, dated July 27, 1832, brings information that they had been broken up by the command of the viceroy. Knowledge, however, is the possession of the mind; and when it is once implanted, man cannot take it away. The acquisitions of these few months, carried into all the walks of life and distributed through the country, we trust, will prove to be the good seed of the kingdom, springing up hereafter, and bearing fruit, an hundred fold.

The schools for children at Maulmein, taught chiefly by the missionaries' wives, are increasingly interesting as means of doing good. The Karen school established above Maulmein, on the river, is taught by Moung-Doot, and as he and his wife are both pious, they may be expected to exert the best influence, not only on the children, but on the parents.

There is a school for adults at Maulmein, containing twenty pupils, under the instruction of Moung Tsanloon. In a late excursion among the Karens contiguous to that place, Mr. Judson selected three interesting young men to enter the school, designing to qualify them to read and interpret the Scriptures to their countrymen. Through their influence, the light of knowledge will be carried into the Karen wilds, and the Christians, it is hoped, will thus be enabled to advance the more rapidly in holy attainments.

The schools at Tavoy are more interesting and successful. In a letter from Mrs. Boardman, dated in January, 1832, she says: "On our removal to Maulmein in 1830, our day schools in Tavoy were entirely broken up; and it was not till last April, that I found myself sufficiently at leisure to attempt anything in that way again. I then opened a school with five scholars, under the care of a respectable and intelligent Tavoy female. We met with much encouragement, so that other schools have been since established, and our number of day scholars is now about eighty; which, with the boarding-schools, two village-schools, and about fifty persons who learn during the rainy season, in the Karen jungle, make upwards of one hundred and seventy under our instruction. The scholars in the jungle, of course, cannot come to us often; but a great many have been in to be examined in their lessons, and we are surprised and delighted at the progress they have made.

"The children of the day schools in town, and some of the teachers, attend worship on Lord's day. About forty can repeat Mrs. Judson's catechism, and some have added to that the account of the 'creation,' the 'prodigal son,' the 'rich man and Lazarus,' and part of the 'sermon on the mount.' The little girls,

about forty in number have many of them made good progress in needle-work. But what gives me far greater pleasure, is the interest with which they listen to religious instruction, and the affectionate, docile disposition they manifest. They are very much ridiculed for studying the Christian books; but they bear it patiently. One little boy, eleven years old, in the boarding-school, has committed to memory 800 verses of Scripture, besides a short compendium of astronomy, geography, and chronology.

"One of the female schools, containing eleven scholars, is extremely interesting. Five of the scholars are members of the church; two have asked for baptism, and one of the remaining four is a very hopeful inquirer. They attend worship in Burman every morning and evening, and the female prayer meeting Wednesday forenoon." The same letter says, "I have no doubt that village-schools could be established with ease throughout the province, if some person acquainted with the language and manners and character of the Tavoyans, could devote all his time to the object. We have had two applications from villages a few miles distant, and have established one school with twelve scholars. More than ten children in another village are waiting, ready to enter as soon as the school-house is finished. We have now seven schools in operation, besides the two on our premises, and those in the Karen jungle. The Karens throughout the province, believers and unbelievers, are exceedingly anxious to have their children taught to read."

VILLAGE PREACHING.

This has been pursued with very encouraging success. The evidence which it gives of the spirit of inquiry throughout the country, and the zeal of the people to hear of the religion of Christ, is most gratifying to the minds of the missionaries. The first excursion of this kind was made by Mr. Boardman around Tavoy. Similar ones have since been made by Mr. Mason, and by Mr. Judson around Maulmein and between Rangoon and Prome. They go with two or three converts to aid them in the work, and pro

vide themselves with large quantities of tracts. At every village where the people will listen, they stop and preach; give tracts to those who will receive them—in some instances at every house—and, if circumstances seem to require it, they prolong their stay, or leave one of the native converts for a while, to instruct them more fully. In some cases, the whole village has come to hear, and many have been brought to the knowledge of the truth. The following, from Mr. Mason's journal, is a specimen of the encouragement met with during these tours. "Before sunrise this morning I received a visit from the chief of a neighboring village, who introduced himself with a present, and said, he came to request books for his village, and to show me the way there.

While putting up tracts, he was careful to observe, 'There are many houses in my village.' He went round with me to every house, and exhorted the people to examine the books, and consider the doctrines therein taught.

Besides the tracts thus distributed, many from distant regions receive them at the missionary stations, and carry them to every part of the country. Some interesting cases of conversion have occurred, of persons whose attention was first excited by tracts, found far in the interior. The following case, which came to the knowledge of Mr. Judson, deserves notice. "A man and wife near the head of the Pa-tah river, though not baptized, and *never seen by any foreign missionary*, both died in the faith; the man enjoining it on his surviving friends to have the 'View of the Christian Religion,' laid on his breast and buried with him."

In the first part of the year 1832, Mr. Judson made two excursions among the Karen villages, and his visits were every where sought with interest. On the 11th of March, 1832, while passing up the river, he fell in company with a boat full of men; and when he inquired whether they wished to hear the gospel of Christ, an elderly man, the chief of the party, replied, that he had already heard much of the gospel, and there was nothing he desired so much as an interview

with the teacher. "We accordingly went to the shore," says Mr. Judson, "and spent several hours very delightfully under the shade of the overhanging trees, and the banner of the love of Jesus. The old man's experience was so clear, and his desire for baptism so strong, that though circumstances prevented our gaining so much testimony of his conduct since believing, as we usually required, we felt that it would be wrong to refuse his request. After the ordinance, he went on his way rejoicing aloud, and declaring his resolution to make known the eternal God, and the dying love of Jesus, on all the banks of the Yoon-zalen, his native stream." "The dying words of an aged man of God," continues Mr. Judson, "when he waived his withered, death-struck arm and exclaimed '*the best of all is, God is with us*'—I feel in my very soul.—Yes, the Great Invisible is in these Karen wilds That mighty Being, who heaped up these rocks, and reared these stupendous mountains, and poured out these streams in all directions, and scattered immortal beings throughout these deserts,—he is present by the influence of his Holy Spirit, and accompanies the sound of the gospel with converting, sanctifying power."

PRINTING.

On the arrival at Calcutta of Mr. Hough, who was a printer as well as minister, the Serampore brethren presented our mission with a press and types. This department of labor, however, began to assume a more vigorous and encouraging character, on the accession to the mission of Mr. Bennett, in 1830. He has been incessantly occupied in printing tracts and portions of the Scriptures, till the present time. Messrs. Cutter and Hancock have since been added to this department, and *four* presses are now at work. The translation of the New Testament is completed, and the *whole* of it is now in circulation. Twenty other works have also been prepared by the brethren—all but one of which—the Burman Grammar—are designed for circulation in the country. Since the arrival of Mr. Bennett, it is estimated that he has published at least 250,000 tracts, which can be

issued at the rate of eight octavo pages for a cent. In addition to the tracts, a letter from Mr. Bennett, dated December 19th, 1832, says, I am happy to say that the New Testament is now out of press. It makes a volume of 624 octavo pages, and has been printed in eight months and twenty-eight days from the commencement of the composition to the close of the presswork. Three thousand copies have been printed—so that the number of pages is 1,872,000!! —The whole number of pages printed since my return from Bengal on the 15th of March last, is 2,388,000. The number of Tracts 30,000—and a Spelling Book of thirty-six pages in the Karen language, 3,000 copies. The characters for the latter are like the Burman except six or eight, and we make the Burman fonts answer for both as far as they will. I am now engaged in book-binding, as the Testament is out, and we wish as soon as possible to furnish the native Christians with a copy. There is no room here to be idle.

REMARKS.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones left the Burman mission to establish a new station at Siam, at the close of September, 1832. Mr. and Mrs. Wade returned to America, in consequence of the state of his health, and arrived in May, 1833. They were accompanied by two native converts, a Burman and Karen. After a year's residence in this country, they are hoping, with fresh vigor and a large reinforcement of missionaries, to return to the scene of their toils.

The whole number of American missionaries now in Burmah is eighteen.

There are also in the service of the mission two native preachers, and several native assistants, who serve as school-teachers, tract-distributors, &c.

The amount of success which God has given to the mission, has been steadily increasing.

FUTURE EFFORTS.

The increasing amount of missionary exertion will increase the amount of expense. The addition of laborers to the different fields, has drawn largely on the treasury; and their future support will, of course, require an augmentation of liberality on the part of

the churches. An appeal for that augmentation, we trust, will not be in vain. For we rejoice to believe that the Christian community are ready to bestow of their abundance, to promote the cause of the Redeemer.

While we look with pleasure on the evidence that we have not labored in vain, manifested in the preceding pages, let us remember how much remains to be done. Supposing a generation of men to continue thirty years, since our mission commenced in Burmah, two-thirds of her eight millions (the lowest estimate) have gone to the awards of eternity. And how few of them have heard the name of Jesus! A few—a precious few—have joined the hosts of the redeemed. But where are the remainder?

DUTY OF THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION.

In view of these facts, two things are required of us. 1. *A spirit of self-denial.* This must exhibit itself in a willingness to contribute, to the extent of our means, for the sustentation of the cause. Let us not give the trifles which we shall not feel; but let us offer to the Lord an oblation worthy of our gratitude as Christians, and worthy of our professions as pitying the souls of men.

There are some, too, among our churches, who must offer *themselves* to God. A band of four thousand missionaries would be far more worthy of our churches, than the little company of four thousand who now bear the heat and burden of the day. Let ministers seek out in their churches, and encourage suitable missionaries. Let not parents and friends kill their ardent feelings, and quench their missionary spirit. Send them, if they will go. Resign them to the work to which their heavenly Father has called them, and in which you feel so high an interest. And let the young men break away from the endearments of home and native soil; resist the obstructions in their way, and enter on the apostolic work of saving souls.

2. The church must *cultivate a spirit of prayer.* This, and the spirit of missions, have a reciprocal influence. Pray much for the heathen, and a missionary spirit wakes up, of course. We cannot look for the conversion of the world, till there is more of fer-

vent piety, more of deep, absorbing devotion, more love of communion with heaven among us. We must return to primitive piety, and then we shall have primitive success. Prayer must become the very atmosphere, breathed by the church; and holiness must be stamped upon the lines of every countenance.—"Arise, O Lord, into thy rest, thou, and the ark of thy strength."

MISSIONARIES.

The following table contains the names of all the missionaries sent to the Burman Empire by the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, with the date of their arrival there, &c.

Missionaries.	*Arrival.*	*Remarks.*
Adoniram Judson	July, 1813	At Maulmein.
Mrs. Ann H. Judson	" "	Died at Amherst, Oct. 24, 1826.
George H. Hough	Oct. 1816	Left the mission in 1827 or 8.
Mrs. Hough	" "	" " "
Edw. W. Wheelock	Sept. 1818	Died, August, 1819.
Mrs. Wheelock	" "	Died on her passage to America, 1831.
James Colman	" "	Died at Cox's Bazar, July 4, 1822.
Mrs. Colman	" "	Married Mr. Sutton, Eng. Miss.
Jonathan D. Price	Dec. 1821	Died at Ava, Feb. 1828.
Mrs. Price	" "	Died at Rangoon, May, 1822
Jonathan Wade	Dec. 1823	At Maulmein.
Mrs. D. B. L. Wade	" "	" "
Geo. D. Boardman	April, 1827	Died near Tavoy, Feb. 1831.
Mrs. S. H. Boardman	" "	At Tavoy.
Cephas Bennett	Jan. 1830	At Maulmein, preacher and printer.
Mrs. S. Bennett	" "	" "
Eugenio Kincaid	Nov. 1830	At Rangoon.
Mrs. Kincaid	" "	Died at Maulmein, Dec. 19, 1831.
Francis Mason	" "	At Tavoy.
Mrs. H. M. Mason	" "	" "
John Taylor Jones	Feb. 1831	At Bankok, Siam.
Mrs. Eliza G. Jones	" "	" " "
Oliver T. Cutter	Dec. 1831	At Maulmein, printer.
Mrs. N. B. Cutter	" "	" "
Thomas Simons	an. 1833	" "
Royal B. Hancock	" "	" " printer and stereotyper.
Mrs. A. S. Hancock	" "	" "
Miss S. Cummings	" "	" " teacher.
Nathan Brown	June, 1833	
Mrs. E. W. Brown	" "	
Abner Webb	" "	
Miss C. S. W. Webb	" "	
Miss C. J. Harrington	" "	

The following table exhibits the number baptized in Burmah from the beginning.—Of these, eleven have been excluded, and eleven have died in the faith.

Year.	*Place.*	*Natives.*	*Foreign.*	*Total.*
1819	Rangoon,	3		3
1820		7		7
1821		3		3
1822		5		5
1823		None.		—
1824		War.		—
1825		"		—
1826	Enmah,	3		3
1827	Amherst,	1		1
1828	Maulmein and Tavoy,	29	4	33
1829	Rangoon, Maulmein, Tavoy, and Mergui, about	39	12	51
1830		42	8	50
1831		148	89	237
1832		170	11	181
		450	124	574

RECAPITULATION AND COMPARATIVE VIEW.

The American Baptist Mission in Burmah commenced in the year 1813. In the twenty years which have elapsed, there have been sent thirty-three missionaries, male and female, to that country, under the patronage of the Board. Of these, fifteen have been removed by death, or otherwise, from the field of their labors; and eighteen are now on the ground. Nine—more than a quarter of the whole number—sailed in the course of the year 1832. The first baptism in Burmah occurred in 1819, when three natives were admitted to the church. Since that time, about four hundred and fifty have chosen the service of God, and joined the churches at Rangoon, Tavoy, Maulmein, and Mergui. Four presses and three printers have been sent out. About 250,000 tracts have been printed, and circulated throughout the whole empire. The New Testament is translated and printed, and an epitome of the Old. A large number of children have enjoyed the advantages of Christian schools. Villages have been visited, and many in them have believed in Jesus. The Karens and the Toung-thoos have heard the word of life, and multitudes of the former have become the disciples of Christ.

No. 135.

A PLAIN DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

TWO BRETHREN, A. & B.

OF

THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION.

BY A FRIEND TO ZION IN GEORGIA.

Brother A. Good morning, brother B. I am truly glad to see you at my house so early this morning. I hope you have something pleasing and profitable to relate to me and my family concerning religion?

Brother B. Nothing very particular; but my mind has been running a great deal, of late, upon this Missionary and Anti-missionary business; and, as *you* know, I am what people call an Anti-missionary man—and, as *I* know, you are what people call a Missionary man, I thought I would just walk over, and have a serious, Christian, and brotherly chat with you on the subject.

A. With all my heart, my dear brother. But, I hope our conversation on this interesting and important subject, is to be not only *serious*, *Christian*, and brotherly; but, also, cool and dispassionate—candid and plain, as between brethren. And, indeed, I hope we shall enter upon this subject with hearts lifted up to Almighty God in prayer; that our conversation may be to the edification of ourselves, the benefit of others, and the honor and glory of God.

B. I agree to all this; and hope, and trust, it may be as you say—for my own part, I wish to know what is right.

A. My brother, if we must enter on this subject, the first thing, (if we would go correctly to work,) is to settle the meaning of the word *Missionary;* about which there is so much ado. I would, therefore,

ask you, my brother,—what is the meaning of this word?

B. Why, I have always understood the word Missionary to mean a money-hunter, or a person going about the country preaching, or rather pretending to preach the Gospel, when, in reality, he is only hunting money; and begging people out of their hard earnings as he says, for religious purposes, when, indeed, it is only to be put into his own pocket; thus cheating the people, and carrying on a great imposition and speculation.

A. If this be the idea you have attached to that word, it is no wonder you have been so opposed to Missionaries. If I understood the word as you do, I should be as strenuous in my opinion as you are, or perhaps more so. But I would further ask,—How do you define the word Apostle.

B. Why, Apostle, I always thought, meant one of the preachers in the days of Jesus, while he was here on earth, such as Peter and Paul, and others.

A. Peter and Paul were certainly Apostles, though Paul was not called to preach the Gospel, till some time after our Saviour had, in person, left this world. But permit me to observe, my brother, you have given no definition of the word Apostle, as to its literal or proper signification.

B. Will you be so kind as to let me hear your definition of Apostle and Missionary too? for I should be glad to know the proper meaning of them both.

A. I will with pleasure. And here, before I proceed, suffer me to say, I am truly sorry that you do not know the origin of these words; that is, you do not know the languages from which they are derived; for if you did, we should have no difficulty on the subject. And further, if you were acquainted with the proper meaning of these words, and knew from whence they are derived, &c. &c., I am persuaded that all those prejudices which now possess your bosom, would be done away.

The fact is, both these words signify the very *same* thing. They both come from words, or verbs, which signify to send, or to send forth; and when used as

names, they signify persons sent, or sent forth. The only difference between the words is that of sound; one following the sound of the Greek—the other the Latin. The word Apostle comes from the Greek verb Apostello. The word Missionary, from the Latin verb Mitto; but these both signify, in English, to send, or to send forth. Therefore, the word Missionary, in its literal sense, signifies *any* one sent, or sent forth, on any business or matter whatever; but when the word Missionary is used in a religious sense, it signifies a minister of the Gospel, or one *sent of God*, to preach the Gospel:—consequently, every minister of the Gospel, who is indeed *sent of God*, is a *Missionary*, whether he knows it or not, or whether he believes it or not; *of course*, every word which our opposing brethren say against Missionaries, is just so much said against themselves, if indeed they are sent of God to preach the Gospel! Now, my brother, is it not a pity that people, yea, ministers of the Gospel too, should calumniate, vilify and abuse themselves, and yet not know it!! Oh! my dear brother, well might we adopt the language of the prayer of the dying Jesus in this case, and say,—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

B. Well! but brother A. you cannot show me the word Missionary in the New Testament, nor in the word of God?

A. I knew that as well as you. But, my brother, reflect for one moment, and you will certainly find that this mode of argument is too frivolous for any man of sense. And, more especially, I wish you to remember, that if it proves anything it proves too much. But as I am aware that this is considered a strong argument by you and your party, I shall therefore take some pains in showing you, that it is *no argument at all*, or, as already said, if it will prove anything, it will prove too much. I ask you, my brother,—Do you find the word "immersion" in the New Testament? Or do you find the expression, "imputed righteousness of Christ" in the word of God? You certainly do not. Now remember that this is the very same argument of which those make use who practise sprinkling; and also of

those who deny the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ. They cry out, "You can't show us immersion in the New Testament," nor "the expression imputed righteousness of Christ, in the word of God." And they think, or seem to think, they have completely stopped the mouths of those who hold to both. Now what are you to do? You must see that according to your own arguments, and in order to be consistent with yourself, you must drop the practice of immersion, and give up the doctrine of imputed righteousness. You must further see, that inasmuch as you bring forward the *same* argument against the Missionaries, which those other persons bring against the Baptists; therefore, I say, you must see that if your argument is good, so is theirs; and if theirs is *not* good, neither is yours. There is no way of getting round or over this.

B. But then, we have men enough among the Baptists who know the Greek language, in which, as I have been told, the New Testament was originally written, and they all say, the word baptize signifies to immerse; and I believe them. Indeed, I have heard you explain the thing to my entire satisfaction.

A. True, my brother, the Greek word, rendered baptize in our present version, signifies to immerse, dip, plunge, &c.; and so the Greek word, rendered Apostle in our version, signifies Missionary, or one sent. The truth is, neither of the words was ever translated into English, properly speaking, but only altered a little in their termination, while the original Greek words were retained. If you do not feel free to believe me, go and ask others who know the original, and are not warped by sectarian prejudice,—go and consult the translation of Doddridge, Macknight, and G. Campbell, and you will find what I say to be correct. And now, my brother, I hope you will learn, and remember for the future, that to speak lightly of the word Missionary is the same as to speak lightly of the word Apostle. I do humbly trust that you will never deride, nor yet be frightened at this word any more, or speak hard things of those who bear the name. You said you *believed* those who were acquainted with the Greek,

&c. when they told you thus and so concerning the word baptize—why then will you not believe them, when they tell you the proper meaning of the words Missionary and Apostle?

B. But do you not believe there is a speculation going on in this Missionary business?

A. I candidly *do not.* Nor do I believe it is in the power of you, or any one of our Anti-Missionary brethren, to prove one solitary charge, of the many which are brought forward of this nature. I know there is a mighty outcry about speculation; but is it not strange, passing strange, that those who never gave *one cent*, nor ever intend to give towards the spread of the Gospel, or the glorious Missionary effort that is now making, as the means in the hands of God to evangelize the world, should be the very persons to find fault about the money expended in this business! And is it not equally strange, that those who know nothing *at all* of what is doing, should be able to discover fraud, speculation, &c., while those who know the whole movement, and where every cent of the money goes, how expended, &c., should know nothing of this! And, surely, if any persons ought to complain about the improper expenditure of money, it should be those who give their money, and not those who do not give, or ever intend to give! But, my brother, what is still more strange than all the rest, if possible, is, that all those Christians, and especially ministers of the Gospel, not only among Baptists, but also, of other Christian denominations, who have always been the most signalized for disinterested Christian benevolence, honesty, zeal, and unwearied exertion and perseverance in the cause of humanity, of religion, of Christ, and of God —and whose moral and religious characters stand fair and unimpeachable—strange! that all the while these men are nothing but a band of swindlers, pick-pockets, and cheats!!! Be assured, my brother, there is a particular account taken of the time when, the place where, and the manner how this money is expended; and this you would know, if you knew anything *at all* about it. Indeed, what suprises me, is, that so much should be done at so small an expense. You can now

obtain the blessed word of God for a mere trifle, compared with the usual price of paper, printing, binding, &c. before Bible and other benevolent societies sprang into being. The fact is, the day is coming, when it will be known who loved and hugged up their money, and who did not—when it will be known, who loved their money better than precious immortal souls, and who did not!

B. I have been looking over the word of God again and again, and I can find no—"Thus saith the Lord," —no authority, either in precept or example, for all this Missionary business.

A. This appears very strange, indeed. If I mistake not, the Missionary business, as you call it, is to do all the good we can, as instruments in the hands of God, in administering to the spiritual wants of our fellow-creatures—in preaching a crucified Saviour to a dying world. The Gospel is glad tidings of great joy, peace on earth, and good will towards all men—The Missionary spirit is to *declare* these glad tidings to *all* men.—The Missionary business is to visit every city, hamlet, and cottage—yea, every part of the whole world, and every spot where human beings live, and tell them of a Saviour—tell them Jesus died to save lost sinners. The ascending Jesus says, "Go ye into *all* the world, and preach the Gospel to *every* creature!" Surely this is precept—is it not? Well, the Missionary spirit is to carry this command—this positive, great, and heart-cheering command into effect. The Saviour says, "Ye are the salt of the earth." Now, my brother, I pray you to reflect upon the import of this solemn passage of Scripture. What is salt? and what its use? Is it not to save from putrefaction and loss, those bodies and substances which are predisposed to putrefaction, and which would putrefy and rot, and consequently be lost, were it not for the application, yea, the *speedy* application of this salt? Again, salt is not only to save *from* putridity, but to render sweet and palatable to the taste, and proper for the master's use. Now, if Christians are to the world, not a *part* of the world, but the whole of it, what salt is to a piece of flesh and other substances subject to putrefy, O! then, what a loud and

irresistible call for speedy, powerful, and unwearied exertion! Here is a great body, a mighty mass, even eight hundred millions of human beings, carrying within them by nature the properties of putridity and the seeds of death! Six hundred millions of these precious immortal souls are not even nominally Christians, and have not so much as heard of Jesus! Now, my brother, the missionary spirit is to apply this little remaining salt, as far as possible, to the whole of this vast body of putridity and death. It is to go and tell those perishing millions that there *is a Saviour.* Thirty years is the length of time allowed for a generation to pass away. Then, my brother, I ask—Where, O! where is the Christian heart that can reflect unmoved, that in thirty years, six hundred millions of human beings must die, without having heard of Jesus—must stumble over the high mountains of darkness, and be lost for ever! Surely no Christian can know this, without feeling a strong desire to extend the helping hand, and exert himself, as God's instrument, in sending the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to all that believe, to these perishing sons and daughters of Adam.

Again, our Saviour says, "Ye are the light of the *world*"—not a part of the world. The missionary spirit is to let this light shine into every part of the whole world, driving away moral darkness, and imparting moral light. "Go," says our blessed master, "and teach *all* nations," &c. The missionary spirit is to obey. God, by the mouth of Paul, says, "How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard," &c. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" therefore, the missionary spirit says, they shall hear—they shall have the word of God.—Hence it is that you see Bible Societies established, and Missionaries going forth.

It would be in vain, my dear brother, to attempt to point out the many positive Gospel precepts which call upon *every* Christian for the most unwearied exertions of a missionary nature; we shall, therefore, take a glance at the examples.

We find after our Saviour had commanded his Apostles to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to

every creature, it is said, in the 20th verse, "And they went forth and preached *every where*," &c. This is precisely what the missionary spirit aims at, in this day and time. It is said, in the same verse, that the Lord worked *with* them. So he does at present; he works *with* his missionary servants, as the instruments in his hands. If this is not example, then, my brother, I am at an utter loss to know what you mean by example.

If you wish any further example, take the whole Apostolic dispensation; see how laborious, persevering, and indefatigable were all the Apostles, in visiting every nation, and kindred, and tribe of people; but especially Paul, the great Apostle or Missionary to the Gentile or Heathen world. And if you will turn your attention to the 4th chapter of Phil. 15 and 16 verses, you will find proof that the brethren supported Paul while thus engaged in preaching to the heathen, just as the missionary brethren do in this day and time. See also 2 Cor. xi. 7, 8, 9, and xii. 13, &c. &c.

I would therefore say, that the Gospel breathes the very spirit of benevolence and religious missionary effort, and that the missionary spirit is the very spirit of the Gospel. Yea, I would say, the missionary effort now making, is the very hand of the Gospel, (so to speak) which the Lord of hosts is putting forward, by which to evangelize the world, and gather in the fields, which are already white to the harvest.—And that nearly the whole of the New Testament, both in precept and example, is a "Thus saith the Lord," for the missionary exertions that are now making.

B. But if God wishes the heathen to be converted, can he not convert them without your help, and all this ado?

A. True, God is able to carry his purposes into effect, without the agency of man at all, if he sees proper. But, you must remember, this observation is just as true about all things else, whether at home or abroad, whether temporal or spiritual, as it is about the conversion of the heathen. If God wishes it done he *can* do it. Why then, my brother, do you give

yourself all this trouble about your crop, when the truth is, if God wills you to have a plentiful crop, he *can* give it to you *without* your labor and all this ado? Or why trouble yourself about any blessing whatever, for if God wills you to have it, he *can* give it to you without your agency? God *is able* to fill your barns with grain and your coffers with gold, without your labor; so give yourself no trouble; throw by all your implements of husbandry, and lie down and fold your hands, and say, "A little more sleep," &c. Again—If God wills the people to be converted in our own county, he *can* convert them, or in our own state, or country, or family—our wives, or sons, or daughters, or servants. If God wills any, or all these to be converted, he *can* do it without *our* work; so, then, away with all preaching, and praying, and exhorting, and reading—send home your ministers and burn your meeting-houses, for the truth is, God *can* convert the people, and save their souls without all these. Ah! my brother, you must see that your principle is rotten, and when reduced to practice, it will not do.

The truth is, this principle goes not only to paralyze, but completely to destroy all human agency whatever, relative to all things, both in the physical and moral world. Again, what God *can* do, is no part of our business; our duty and business is to obey. Suppose there is a kind master with a great many servants; and he tells one of them to go to a distant part of his plantation, and give food to some persons there, who are likely to perish; but this servant, instead of obeying, says to his master, "Sir, if you wish those persons to be fed, you *are able* to feed them without my help; I shall not go one step." What would you think of such a servant? Would you not say he was an insolent and disobedient servant? But what is still worse, suppose that this disobedient servant not only refuses to obey his master's orders himself, but does all in his power to hinder others from obeying, and continually whispers in their ears, *your master is able to feed those people, if he wishes to have them fed, without your help;* and when he finds they are determined to obey their master, and do their duty, he actually insults and

abuses them for this act of obedience, and declares he will no longer keep company with them, or any one else that will obey their master, in affording relief to those persons who are starving for bread. What do you say of this servant now? O! you will say, his conduct is exceedingly improper. Very well, I leave you to make the application. There is one idea more embraced in this principle of yours, which I desire you to notice; and that is, it goes to impeach God with folly, for having called into requisition, or pressed into his service the weak agency of man, (which he has done from his first formation to the present time,) when, according to this principle of yours, there was no necessity for it, or propriety in so doing! Brother B., reflect and tremble.

B. What! Do you say God has called into requisition the agency of man from his first existence?

A. Certainly. When God created man, he put him into the garden to dress it. And surely if God willed the garden to be dressed, he was able to dress it, without the help of Adam. And I have sometimes thought this was to show that man was to be the dresser of God's spiritual garden, so long as he had a church upon earth. But let us return to the subject.

B. Yes, I wish to return; for you really have made my argument about God's ability look bad enough. But I still feel that the conversion of the soul is God's work; and we ought to be careful, lest we be found taking his works into our hands.—Remember Uzzah.

A. True, my brother, the conversion of the soul is God's work, and his *only;* and a man can no more convert his own soul, or that of another, independent of God, than he can create a world. But it is equally true, that he can no more make one grain of corn, or seed of cotton, independent of God, than he can convert a soul, or create a world.—Nay, my brother, all the men in the universe combined, can no more make one blade of corn grow, independent of God and his blessing, than they can pull down the strong pillars of heaven. Is it not in God that we live, move, and have our being? But, because it is God's work, and by his blessing that our corn grows, and of his unmerited goodness that we have bread to eat, shall we cease to

use our agency; or cease to make use of the means which God has put into our power? And so in a spiritual sense, because God giveth the increase, shall Paul cease to plant, or Apollos to water? Surely not. Again—You appear to be so fearful of doing God's work—I would ask you, whose work do you wish to do? Is it your own? If so, it will be the work of the flesh and sin. Or is it the devil's work you wish to do? If so, it will be the work of darkness and mischief.

And is it not as much the work of God to convert souls in your neighborhood as in India? Then to be consistent, you ought to cease to preach, or exhort, or pray, or weep over, or plead with poor sinners; lest you might be the instrument of their conversion, and thus become guilty of doing God's work. We are commanded in the word of God, in almost innumerable instances, to this effect—To WORK while it is day, &c. To LABOR for the meat that perisheth not, &c. And in one place we are *expressly* called, Laborers together *with* God (1 Cor. iii. 9.) And again, it is said, we are workers together *with* him, &c. (See 2 Cor. vi. 1.)

You wish me to remember Uzzah; and so I would say to you—remember Meroz, with all the inhabitants thereof, who were to be *cursed bitterly*, for *not* doing the very thing you are so fearful of doing, viz. HELPING the Lord.—(See Judges v. 23.) And as to Uzzah, whose case frightens you so very much, I do not think it a parrallel case, or case in point; for he had *no* command *to touch* the ark of the Lord, but the Missionary *has* a positive command, *to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.*

B. Well, but did not Uzzah think he was right?

A. It is very possible he did; and what then? I hope you do not think that I, or any other person, who is favorable to missionary efforts, will say that Christians ought to be governed in their conduct, merely by their *own* ideas of right and wrong, independent of the word of God? On the contrary, we contend, that we must be governed by the word of God; and that we do stand, yea, *firmly* stand on Scripture ground in all our missionary exertions. And, moreover, that we fall

very far short, after our most vigorous efforts, of doing anything like as much as the Scriptures require us to do, as God's instruments, towards the salvation of the world. Christ himself plainly teaches us, (see Luke xvii. 10) that we are bound to do *all things* that are commanded us, and then say, we are unprofitable servants. And who, I would ask, can say he has done *all* that was commanded him, or all that God has put it in his power to do? Not one.

B. You said just now, that the Missionary had a command to go into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature; to this I have no particular objection. But what are all those about, who are not preachers? that say they also are engaged in the missionary cause?

A. Most certainly. There are two ways in which things may be done, viz.—*actually* and *virtually*. For instance, there is a house to be built; I am no mechanic, nor do I strike a stroke on the house; yet, by the blessing of God, I am enabled to find all the materials, bear all the expenses, and support all the mechanics while at work; hence it will be said of me, and justly too, that I built the house—not *actually*, but *virtually*. And so it is, my dear brother, by preaching the Gospel. Though I may be no preacher, *actually*; yea, I might be a delicate female, and even confined to a sick bed, yet by affording, by the blessing of God, a part of all those different secondary means which are necessary in carrying the Gospel to different and distant parts of the world, I thus become the weak, though much honored and happy instrument, in the hands of Almighty God, of preaching (that is, *virtually*) the glorious Gospel to perishing thousands in those destitute parts of the world, thousands of miles from me, where I never have been, nor expect ever to be. O, my brother, what Christian should not exult in, and praise the Lord for such a privilege?

B. But have we not enough unconverted people at home, to whom we may preach? Why then go so far abroad?

A. True, there are unconverted sinners at home; but do we not also preach to them? And as I know this is a very popular argument with you anti-mis-

sionary brethren, do suffer me to ask—Who are making the most vigorous exertions for those at home? Who ride and preach the most? Who distribute the most Bibles, Testaments, Tracts, and other good books amongst those at home? And I might add, whose labors appear to be the more abundantly blessed of God? Who, by the help of God, are the foremost in all those things *at home?* If you will let experience, observation, and matters of fact answer, you must, you will say, they are those who are also engaged in supporting the gospel abroad. But again, according to your principles, how can you expect any minister to go and preach to other churches and congregations, while there are unconverted persons in his own neighborhood or congregation? Or how can you wish or expect him to go and preach to others, while there is an unconverted person in his own family? You must see this argument will not do.

B. Does not charity begin at home? Why then do you take the money—the hard earnings of the poor negro, to expend in sending the gospel abroad, while these unfortunate people are measurably neglected here amongst us?

A. The missionary brethren certainly pity this unfortunate class of people as much, and do as much to benefit them as the anti-missionary brethren do, if not more. But the truth is, hundreds and thousands of these people do receive and enjoy all the benefits of a preached gospel—thousands of them are rejoicing in an humble assurance of the pardon of their sins, for Christ's sake. But, my brother, to convince you that the missionary man pities these people as much as the anti-missionary man, and that this argument of yours is a mere *make-shift*, a mere "*get off*," suffer me to ask you, Do not the anti-missionary brethren have negro slaves? What are they doing, with all the money and hard earnings of their poor negroes? Are they giving it all back to them? Do they educate them any better? Do they preach to them any more? Do they give them better opportunities in any way? Again, my brother, What *is the reason* you *never* say one word about *poor* negroes' *hard* earnings, when you see hundreds of

persons laying out large sums of money, in purchasing a thousand superfluities, and even sinful amusements and gratifications of life? Yea, a man may lay out just what he pleases—he may spend his hundreds and thousands a year, in sinful and wicked amusements—he may buy barrels of whiskey and hogsheads of rum, to his own hurt and the great annoyance and injury of both civil and religious society; yet you are perfectly silent! But, let a missionary brother spend anything with a view to the furtherance of the gospel, or of religious knowledge in any way, and that moment the hue and cry is raised about charity *at home*, *poor negroes' hard* earnings, &c. &c. Oh! my brother, how is this? Does it not look like a settled opposition to the spread of the gospel, and the diffusion of religious knowledge? Is not the *poor* negro as much benefited by his *hard earnings*, yea more, when it is used in the advancement of religious knowledge, than when laid out in whiskey, to be gulped down his master's throat, or other unnecessary articles, of which the *poor* negro is allowed *no* part.

B. But is not this missionary business attended with a great deal of expense, in proportion to the profit?

A. And has it come to this? What! a Christian talk of expense, when the precious, immortal souls of men and women are at stake! Now, my brother, if it had not been that I heard a brother, at an Association once, make this same objection, I could not have believed that any Christian on earth, would ever complain of expense in such a case as this! The brother to whom I allude, observed, "It is very possible that those missionary exertions may have been and may yet be instrumental in the conversion of some few souls; but then," added he, "what is that compared with so much expense?" (or words to that effect.) Another brother, who advocated the missionary cause, replied, "Well, brother, I suppose you understand something of figures; will you be so kind as to take your pen, and calculate the value of *one* soul, and let us see what it is, and whether it is not as much as all that has yet been expended?" This reply appeared to strike the other brother dumb. So, my brother, I would

say to you. But you certainly do know, (our blessed Saviour being judge) that one soul is worth more than the WHOLE world; for "What is a man's profit, if he shall gain the *whole* world, and lose his own soul?" Consequently, you must see from this, that if the *whole world* should be expended in missionary labors, and be instrumental in the salvation of but *one* soul, still it would be a world profitably and well spent.

Brother! brother! Read the 12th chap. of John, 3, 4, 5, and 6 verses, and tremble, when you so much as *think* of expense in such a case as this! Judas cried out much as you anti-missionary brethren are now doing about expense, money, &c. when the anointing of the blessed Redeemer's feet *cost* something. And *remember*, Judas' excuse was the great regard he pretended to have for the poor: but, O! *mark well*, this was *not the fact;* but a covetous disposition was at the bottom of his out-cry about expense! I wish you also to remember, that this expense of which you anti-missionary brethren complain, is on account of Christ's mystical body; for his church, wherever gathered from, is his body, mystically. And I have thought before now, that Jesus Christ suffered this circumstance to take place, on purpose to teach us a great lesson, viz: That if he approved of the expense bestowed, *even* on his own feet, how much more would he approve of that expense bestowed on his body, in the person of his saints. Moreover, I do not believe any man will ever impoverish himself by giving to the Lord, for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver; and he certainly will bless those whom he loveth, as far as shall be for their good and his glory. Again, I believe many people think whatever they withhold from the Lord, or from religious purposes, is just so much clear gain, as to their worldly possessions; and, also, that whatever they may give, is just so much clear loss; but surely such persons have forgotten that "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away." And, also, as the Lord hath said by the mouth of Solomon, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth, shall

be watered also himself:" (Prov. xi. 24, 25:) and "That it is more blessed to give than to receive."—(Acts xx. 35.) Hence, you need not be surprised, my brother, as some appear to be, that the missionary brethren prosper, even in their worldly concerns. Not that I would wish any one to give from a hope of gain—God forbid; but to show that we need not be afraid of reducing ourselves to beggary, as appears to be the case with many.

B. Well, you do appear to tear up my objections on every side; but there is one thing I think you *cannot* deny, and that is, this missionary business has created a world of trouble and disturbance among brethren.

A. Indeed, brother B., I think this among the greatest mistakes you have made yet.

B. What! Do you deny this? And what, pray, has made all the disturbance, if it has not been this missionary business?

A. The *opposition*, my brother, is and has been the cause of all the disturbance! But as this is by far your most popular objection, and the hobby on which you *all* ride, I wish to take a little pains in removing it.—The spirit of freedom and independence, which seized upon the minds of the American people in '76, might just as well have been blamed as the cause of all the fighting and bloodshed which took place during the revolutionary war; and no doubt, all who were opposed to the cause of freedom, did blame it as the cause of all the troubles that took place. And, in a certain sense, it might be so said; but surely the *guilty* cause was the opposition, or the spirit of tyranny exercised towards us. Again, it might have been said by the Jews, that the coming of our blessed Redeemer into this world, was the cause of all the innocent children, of two years old and under, being put to death; and, in a certain sense, this appears to be a fact; but surely the guilty cause was the jealous, wicked-hearted Herod.—And so with the Christian religion; it has been blamed by its opposers, at different times, as the cause of bloodshed, cruelty, and persecution. And, in the first Christian era, the religion of Jesus was blamed as the cause of disturbance. Hence we hear some crying out,

"These men that turn the world upside down, have come hither also." But surely the real guilty cause was the opposition to, and the want of, more of this blessed religion. And so with a thousand other instances which might be brought forward; but let this suffice. Therefore, I say, it is not the missionary spirit and exertions which have, properly speaking, given rise to these disturbances, but the *opposition* has been, and now is, the real cause.

B. But we are fearful you missionary brethren will lay a tax on us after a while, and make us pay into your funds, whether we will or not.

A. Indeed! And this betrays your ignorance, my brother, to the most fearful extent. Suppose we wished to do so, how could we do it? Is not the civil authority the supreme authority of the land? According to the Constitution of the United States, as well as of each state in the Union, there is no power or authority but what is subordinate to the civil; and this civil authority expressly secures liberty of conscience in matters of religion to every individual citizen. How then could any ecclesiastical court or religious body levy and collect a tax, contrary to the constitutional authority of the Federal Government?

But the fact is, we are so far from wishing to do any such thing, that if we knew any person to give grudgingly, if it were but one cent, we would not receive it; for we still maintain, "That God loveth a cheerful giver." And the counterpart of this must be, that he frowneth upon the penurious churl that will not give at all, or giveth grudgingly.

B. But again—I have always been told that you missionary brethren wish to make ministers, whether God has called them or not.

A. This is just like a great many other things you have been told; it is without foundation. To convince you of this, I refer you to the Minutes of Baptist Conventions and other bodies friendly to the education of ministers. In them you will find Resolutions on this subject which, I hope, will satisfy you, and for ever silence this false report which has been propagated against us. One of those Resolutions, adopted by

a body in our own state, reads thus, "Every person proposed to participate in this benefit, (meaning the education fund) shall produce a regular license from the church of which he is a member, to preach the gospel in her bounds, accompanied by a certificate of his good acceptance among his brethren, and of his good report in the community at large." Second, "He shall undergo an examination by, and receive the approbation of, the executive committee of this body, as to his call *of God* to the gospel ministry," &c.

Hence, you see, it is not designed to *make* ministers, as has been falsely reported, but merely to afford the means of further improvement to those whom God has called, and whom their own churches have licensed to preach. And so far from opening a door for a carnal ministry, as some have said, they place a double guard against it.

B. Can you show any Scripture authority for a man's studying after he is called of God to preach?

A. Yes—and I should think this is the very reason why he should study. Paul exhorts Timothy and Titus, again and again, to attend to this business. He exhorts Timothy thus, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The fact is, my brother, these two Epistles, being written to young ministers, are mostly taken up in exhortations to them, to attend to their theological studies. But our great authority in this matter, is the example given us by Jesus Christ himself. After he had chosen and ordained his twelve apostles, and set them apart to the gospel ministry, he still kept them with him about three years, except when they were out on short preaching tours, during the whole of which time, he continually taught and instructed them in the best theological school that ever was on earth. (See Mark iii. 13, 14, 15.) "And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sickness

and to cast out devils." Here, my brother, you see there was a calling, and an ordaining to the work of the ministry, but yet they did not go *fully* into the work, but remained with their teacher; and why? Because, though they were *ordained* ministers, yet they were very ignorant of a great many things they ought to have known, and *afterwards* did know. Now, my brother, I think this ought to satisfy you, or any one else, on this subject. And this is precisely the manner of procedure in our theological institutions, against which so much is said. None are taken into them but those whom we believe to be called of God, and who are actually licensed to preach the gospel, by the churches of which they are members. And it is a rule, that those theological students *shall* preach as much and as often as possible during their studies. It is a most strange and erroneous idea, that because a man is called to preach the gospel, he then needs no further instruction or information. Now, my brother, you know better than this; but to convince you still further, if possible, let me turn your attention to one more striking instance of the necessity of further information, after being called to, and engaged in, the work of the gospel ministry. Apollos "was an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures;" yet when Aquila and Priscilla had heard him preach, "They took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." (See Acts xviii. 24, 26.) Let this suffice, though I could multiply Scripture authority in proof of the point.

B. But will not this learning and theological studying, bring upon us a carnal and ungodly ministry?

A. O, my brother, why will you talk in this strange manner, or entertain these groundless fears. Paul did not think with you; but, on the contrary, he tells us, that a minister must not be "a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil." Hence, you see, that Paul greatly feared the dreadful effects of an ignorant and uninformed ministry. And justly, too, for pride and ignorance go hand in hand, and are as inseparable as cause and effect; indeed, one is the effect, and the other the

cause. Ignorance always begets pride, and this brings on a dreadful train of evil consequences. Remember this, my brother, if you please.—There is one thing in which learning and religion agree, and that is, the more a man has, the more he wants; and again, the less he has, the less he wants. Go to the man who makes no pretensions to religion at all, and who is just as wicked as he can be—talk to him about religion. O, he is just as good as you, or any body else; and has just as much religion as he wants. And just so it is with the illiterate man; he has just as much learning as he wants, and is as wise as any body. Now, in both these cases, those unfortunate and self-conceited men have not enough knowledge to see their deficiency. They both cry out—what good does it do? But go to men of learning or of piety,—talk to them about literature or religion, and they are both ready to acknowledge their deficiency, and tell you they want more. Why and how is this? Because they have enough to know something of their utility, and also to see how much they lack. I know, and so do you, of some brethren who do not know how to read the blessed word of God, and yet they will get up in the church and rail out against learning in the most bitter terms! Oh! brother, let us pray for such—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." They know not that they are aiming a death-blow, so far as their influence goes, at the very root and foundation of all our liberties, both civil and religious? Only do away all learning and learned men, and what should we be, more than an untutored tribe of Indians? What would become of the word of God, or of what use would it be? What would become of our civil government and liberties? Where would be our legislators?—Our statesmen?—Our congressmen?—Our ministers to foreign courts, &c. &c.? Gone, all gone! And then farewell, a long and an eternal *farewell*, to our present liberties and glorious form of government? But, worst of all—Farewell, farewell—a long and last farewell to the *word* of God, the blessed book of eternal life! Do away learning and learned men, and you introduce ignorance, and igno-

rance would introduce its train of evils, which would overturn all civil and religious society. If it had not been for learned men, who could have gathered the word of God from the different languages in which it was written, and put it into our language? And if it were not for learned men *now*, how could we tell whether these scriptures are correctly translated from the Hebrew and Greek, into English, or not? Or how could we tell how many and how great errors may have already crept into our translation, if we could not run back to the original, and there examine for ourselves? And who would there be to translate the word of life into the various languages of the different tribes and nations on earth, who, as yet, have not this book in their own languages? This must be done. And glory to God, it is rapidly doing. God is *now*, by and through the instrumentality of learned men, giving his blessed word to various tribes and nations, who, a little while back, did not so much as know there was such a book! But now, they can read it in their own language—they do read it, and praise God for the gift.

The owl grumbled at the rising sun, because the weaker powers of his eyes were thereby eclipsed; and is it possible that men, who know but little more about learning and its benefits, than the owl did about the benefits of the sun, will complain of those bright rays of the Sun of Righteousness, which God is causing to shine forth, through the instrumentality of learning and learned men, *merely* because their humbler attainments are thereby eclipsed? I would fain hope better things. Once more: Did you ever know a religious man rail out against, and vilify religion and religious men? O, no. Why? Because he knew the value and utility of both, too well. And just so it is with learning and learned men. Those only who know nothing about the value of either, rail out against both. What right has a blind man, to set himself up as a judge of colors? None. And what right has a man, who has never had the advantage of an education, to set himself up as a judge of the utility of learning or learned men? Again—Suppose there is a man who cannot

walk—he either has no feet, or is deprived of the use of them. What would be your surprise, to hear this man, instead of using those means whereby he might be brought to walk, or praising God that there were others who could walk, and thereby help him,—I say, what would be your surprise, if, instead of this, you should hear him continually crying out against walking, and finding fault with those who can walk? and that too, when this man must know, that those persons who can walk, are the instruments, in the hands of God, of communicating to his necessities, and that whenever he wants anything done, he is obliged to call upon those who can walk. You are ready to say, this would be the strangest man, and the strangest conduct you ever knew. Very well, I leave you to make the application.

Observe! Those who are opposed to learning, information, and mental improvement, though I do not suppose they know it, are in fact opposed to, and fighting against the best interests of their country, and striking, as before said, at the root of all our liberties, both civil and religious. Because, you will take notice, our form of government is republican, or democratical, and surely you know that in all republics, or democracies, the strength is in the people; hence you must see, that the strength of the government mustbe in precise proportion to the strength of the people, and this strength will be in precise proportion to the degree of information or mental endowment possessed by every individual citizen in the government.—In a word, in our form of government, the *people* govern. How necessary then, that each man who has a right to a vote, be possessed of that information and mental acquirement which would be necessary in a state legislator, a congressman, a governor, a president; for in reality, the people are the legislators, the congressmen, and the president; only it is in the person of those whom they have chosen. For all civil officers, from the constable to the president, are only the creatures of the people. I hope, my brother, you will take this subject into serious consideration. I feel much concerned in this business. The Baptists have always been considered the greatest

friends to their country, and to republicanism.—This is the spirit of their form of church government, and this they adopted because they conceived it to be the spirit breathed forth by the word of God. Oh! let it not be said, that *Baptists* have become the enemies of their country, by trying to stifle learning and mental improvement, which are two of the strong pillars on which republicanism stands.

B. But if God wants a learned man, can he not call him?

A. True, my brother, and if God chooses, he *can* make one acre of your land, (and that without your clearing it, planting or ploughing it,) yield one or ten thousand bushels of corn. What is the reason, my brother, that you are always advocating those measures which require nothing on your part but *laziness?*

B. Have not some unlearned ministers been greatly blessed in their ministerial labors, and very useful men?

A. Yes, and we thank God for it. But these men were possessed of clear heads, strong minds, and sound hearts. They were not opposed to education, but encouraged it in others, and lamented the want of it in themselves. But, I ask, does the fact of those men being useful, prove anything against the utility of education? Surely not. It only proves they would have been more useful with the advantage of an education!

B. Well, but are not some ministers who have not had the advantage of an education, as great preachers and useful men, and even more so, than some who have had this advantage.

A. I am perfectly free to acknowledge all this. But I still maintain my position, and contend that this, all this, does not go to prove anything against the utility of education in others, nor does it prove that those very men would not have been greater preachers and more useful men with the advantage of an education. Suppose you have one of your hands tied behind your back, and I have the free use of both of mine, but still, notwithstanding this great disadvantage on your part, you are able to lift a greater weight and do more

work with your *one* hand, than I can with *both* of mine—I ask, does this prove that *two* hands are not better than *one?* Or does it prove that you could not do still better, if you had the use of the other hand? Or does it prove that I could do just as well with one hand as both? Surely it proves nothing of all this. I leave you to make the application.

B. Well, my brother, you cut me off at such a rate in all my arguments, that I would give up and call for quarters, if it was not for one thing, and that is, as you must surely agree, that the disciples of our Saviour were ignorant and unlearned men?

A. I know this is a generally received opinion, even by many who are in favor of a well informed ministry; but I can by no means subscribe to the idea. And I think a few minutes' reflection will convince you, and them too, that you are all under a very great mistake. We have ample proof at hand that those men were neither ignorant nor unlearned, according to the ideas associated with these words; or according to their modern signification. Remember, it was Peter and John who were called ignorant and unlearned; (see Acts iv. 13;) now we have the writings of both those men in Greek. Compare their writings with those of the best Greek scholars and classic authors, such as Xenophon, Homer, and others, and you will find their style, language, &c. are pure and correct. This, then, ought to settle the point. Because, if you can write as correctly, in all respects, as an acknowledgedly good scholar, this surely ought to prove, to the satisfaction of all, your good scholarship. But do observe, my brother, Peter and John labored under a vast disadvantage, viz: They were not Grecians, nor was the Greek their mother language; hence, we see, they were capable of writing, and that correctly too, in a language that was not their own. Surely this is more than sufficient to prove my point. Your mother language is English, but suppose you can take your pen and throw together the most excellent ideas in the Greek language, in a style as pure, as chaste, and as grammatical as the very best Greek scholar, do you think you ought to be called *ignorant* and *un-*

learned? Surely not. Well, such was the case with Peter and John, and all the others so far as is known to us. Matthew was called from the receipt of custom; this office he was unfit for, unless he was a good scholar, and capable of writing and transacting business in various languages, as must be evident to you and any one else. But again—The disciples were three years in the best theological school and under the best teacher that ever was on earth, previous to their going *fully* into the work of the ministry. And, in addition to all this, God, by a miracle, enabled them, on the day of Pentecost, to preach the gospel in thirteen different languages. (See Acts ii. 7—13.) Now I wish to be clearly understood; I do not deny but that these men might have been styled ignorant and unlearned in a comparative sense, that is, when compared with Paul, Gamaliel, &c., but they were by no means ignorant and unlearned according to the ideas we attach to, or associate with those terms.

B. But is it not said, God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things which are mighty?

A. Yes; but if you will examine this chapter, you will find that Paul includes himself throughout, as a part of those weak things; and, therefore, it *cannot* answer your purpose, as to an uninformed ministry; for Paul was learned in all the languages, science, and wisdom of his day and time. The fact is, Paul is here speaking in a kind of satirical manner, in accordance with the prejudiced ideas of the Jews and Greeks.—Hence you find in this same chapter, Paul, in this kind of satirical sense, calls the preaching of the gospel, and a crucified Saviour, foolishness and a stumbling block. "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but *we* preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." (See 1 Cor. i. 22, 23.) The fact is, the whole plan of salvation by a crucified Jesus, was considered nothing but a parcel of nonsense, foolishness, and weakness by the unbelieving Jews and Greeks; though it was, indeed, the wisdom

and power of God unto salvation, to all that believed, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

B. Well, brother A, I acknowledge I have different views of this part of the subject, from what I ever had before, and am heartily willing to give it up. You have brought some, yea many things to my mind, which I hope I shall never forget. I will take the whole of what you have said into deep consideration, and look to God for the aid and direction of his holy Spirit.

A. May the Lord grant you the aid necessary to the forming of just ideas, is my most sincere prayer.

B. But there is one thing that appears to be wrong on the part of you missionary brethren concerning us, and that is, you appear to have taken up the idea that we are opposed to the spread of the gospel. God forbid that this should be the case.

A. I too, my brother, can heartily say, God forbid! But suffer me to ask—suppose you were opposed to it in every shape and sense, and did not pretend to deny it, how else could you act, than as you do? What else could you do than speak against it publicly and privately, and preach against it from the pulpit, and do all you could to enlist the prejudices of the religious public against it! What else, I ask, could you do?

B. O, but we do not pray against it.

A. True. And is not this full proof that you are conscious you are wrong? For if your cause is good, why not go to God with it? If you are right in opposing those means, which are, in their nature, calculated to spread the gospel and a knowledge of religious truth, it certainly would be right to pray to God to stop it, and to bless the feeble exertions which you are making against its spread. Yea, I do insist, my brother, the very first step towards consistency on the part of those ministers who are opposed to the missionary cause, is to quit preaching themselves, because every gospel sermon is a missionary effort. The next step towards consistency, would be to quit *praying* for the spread of the gospel, for every sincere prayer is an effort in the missionary cause. And the third and last

step to be completely consistent, would be to pray against it; for our preaching and praying surely ought always to correspond.

B. This, my brother, would be dreadful!—awful!!

A. It would, indeed: nor would I by any means advise you to do so. But still I say, to be consistent with yourselves, you ought to do it. But, my brother, I do not think this would be any worse than being opposed to Bible Societies: for I think this is, in effect, rising up in open and positive opposition to the word of God! and I think if you were to reflect seriously upon it, you would see with me. Because, when you protest against any society, it is not the mere circumstance of their meeting together which you oppose; no, but it is the business in which this society is engaged. Well, in what are Bible Societies engaged. Why, in sending the Bible into different, distant, and destitute parts of the world—they are engaged in putting the word of *eternal life* into the houses and hands of poor dying sinners. But you protest against this. Now the question is—How can you oppose this, unless you are opposed to the Bible, and think it an improper book to send abroad?—an improper book for sinners to read! Alas! my brother, for the Lord's sake—for your own soul's sake—for the soul's sake of lost and perishing sinners, reflect, O! reflect what you are about!

B. Truly this looks bad enough!

A. It surely does, but it looks no worse than it really is. It is not a whit worse than denying to people the liberty of conscience!

B. O, brother, I hope you do not accuse us of that too?

A. I do not know how you can get over it! For instance, I feel for my fellow dying man, and desire to be instrumental in doing something for his spiritual good. I therefore think it my duty to give a part of what the Lord has given me, towards sending the gospel where the people are dying for lack of knowledge; and this I do positively believe, before God and my own conscience, to be my bounden duty. But you say I shall not—if I do you will turn me out of the church. Thus you go as far as your power extends in depriving me

of the liberty of conscience. And what is this mighty crime for which I must be banished from the church and the house of God? The great crime—Oh! can my tongue utter it?—the great crime is, that I desire to see sinners saved from eternal death! My crime, my deep, and black, and dismal crime is, that I gave something towards the spread of the gospel! My *only* and unpardonable crime is, that I threw *one mite* into the treasury of the Lord! For this I must be expelled from church privileges, though my conscience, and the word of God, and the spirit of the gospel, all told me, and yet tell me, it was right—it was my duty: while others can spend their scores of dollars for rum and whiskey to the injury of their own health, the detriment of their family, and the great annoyance of both civil and religious society, and yet maintain their place and standing in the church! Now, my brother, wherein does all this differ from the most settled spirit of persecution and Popery?

B. I hope and trust you are not going to palm persecution and Popery upon us!

A. No. *I* am not going to do it; and would pray God that you might be kept from both. But for the life of me, I cannot tell what else to make of your conduct. You know as well as I do, that it is the spirit of Popery to keep the people in a state of as great ignorance as possible—to keep the Bible out of the hands of the people—to deprive the people of the liberty of conscience in matters of religion—to keep all the means of religious knowledge from the people. The Pope is issuing his prohibitory edicts against missionary enterprize—against Missionary, Bible, and Religious Tract Societies, &c. And why all this? Because the Pope, and all the papal authorities, see and know, that if these things become common, the reign of Popish darkness will come to an end. And now, my brother, reflect, when I ask you, what are our anti-missionary brethren doing, different from the Pope and Popish authorities? Are they not issuing their decrees and edicts against all Missionary, Bible, and Tract Societies? Are they not, in effect, (as we have already shown) denying the liberty of conscience, so far as their power

extends ? Are they not doing all in their power to stop the progress of religious knowledge ? Does not all this breathe the very life and spirit of Popery ? If there is any difference, my brother, I acknowledge I am so stupid I cannot see it. And if you, or any one else, will point out to me the difference, I will thank you for the information. The fact is, if you will compare the different publications, put forth by the Pope himself and the different papal authorities, against Missionary, Bible, and Tract Societies, with those put forth by the anti-missionary brethren against the *same* societies, you will find they are so exactly alike, in *all* respects, as to induce the belief that one must have been borrowed, or copied from the other!! This circumstance ought, surely, to be enough to open the eyes of our opposing brethren.

B. I do acknowledge, that there is something very much alike in their conduct and ours ; but then we have not got to burning the Bible yet ; and you know the Popish authorities have done this in many instances.

A. True, my brother, you have not got to this extent yet. But do you not bid fair for it! And, further, would it not be perfectly consistent with the rest of your conduct to do so. For it really appears to me if it is *wrong* for Bible Societies to send the Bible abroad into the world, it would be *right* for you to burn it! Understand me, my brother. I say, it appears to me, that if it be WRONG for us to *publish* the Bible, it is, of course, RIGHT for you to *burn* it!!

B. Ah! my brother, this alarms me!!

A. Well it may,—it ought.

B. There is one thing, however, that comforts me a little, and that is—If this missionary business is of the Lord, he will bless it, and carry it on. And, further, if it is not, it will come to nothing.

A. This is true. And if you are willing to let this be the criterion whereby to determine whether it is of the Lord or not, then you must give up the point. For, thanks be to Almighty God, he has already blessed it ; and is *now* blessing and carrying it on in the most wonderful manner. This, I know, you may be disposed to question. But surely, my brother, we can-

not deny the combined testimony of hundreds of the most pious and eminent ministers of the gospel, belonging to the Methodist, Episcopalian, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Baptist denominations. All these, with thousands of private characters, declare to us, the glorious effects produced, by and through the agency of missionary exertions, at home and abroad, of which they have been eye and ear witnesses. Enlightened travellers and officers of government, who have visited many of our missionary stations, declare the same things. We see letters from all parts, written by men of piety and integrity, giving circumstantial accounts of these important facts. And there are not a few in our own churches in this state, whose names we could mention, who own these missionary labors as the means, in the hand of God, of their conversion. I know of several myself, who acknowledge religious tracts as the means of bringing them to a knowledge of the truth. And shall we—can we say, all these have become common liars? Surely not.

B. But will not God's purposes stand. And after all your missionary labors, will there be one soul saved, more than what God saw from all eternity would be saved?

A. To be sure God's purposes will stand, and I am rejoiced in the fact. But then, what of all this? Now, I would not think this old, worn out, Antinomian, and infidel excuse for laziness and wickedness, worthy of any notice, were it not that I know it is destroying the usefulness of many, and encouraging thousands to go on in a course of sin. I mean that the false conclusions, drawn from these premises, are doing this injury. I would, therefore, say, (as I have said before) that whatever may be said on this subject, will hold just as true when applied to our preaching and praying, at home, in our own congregations and families, as when applied to our missionary labors abroad; and, also, when applied to things of a temporal nature, just as much as when applied to things of a spiritual nature. It is just as true, that God's purposes will stand with regard to our crops, and after all our toiling and sweating there will not be one grain of corn more made

than what God already knew would be made. What then? Are we on this account to lie down and sleep? Are God's purposes and foreknowledge against, or opposed to man's agency? If you will read Acts xviii. 9, 10, you will find that God himself teaches a very different doctrine, and assigns as a reason why Paul *must* speak and *not hold his peace* while at Corinth, that he *had* much people in that city. Now if Paul had been an Antinomian, might he not have said, "Well, Lord, if thou *hast* these people, why then need I preach to turn them unto thee?" Also, see Paul's account of the shipwreck. Though he had been assured by a messenger from heaven that they should *all* get safe to land, yet when he saw the shipmen, or sailors, about to escape, he tells the centurion--"Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved." My dear brother, I do verily believe that this old Antinomian sentiment causes thousands of Baptists to live in the neglect of duty; and no doubt keeps vast numbers of them from engaging in the missionary cause.

B. But are we not saved by grace?

A. O, yes. And I am so willing to subscribe to this doctrine, that I say it is by grace, (that is, unmerited favor) that I have a morsel of bread to eat. And now, brother B, as it is growing late, and is time for us to draw to a close, let me ask you a question or two before we part.

1. Would it not be well for you to stop your opposition, lest you be found fighting against God?

2. Will it not be a poor death-bed consolation to think you never gave *one cent* to the spread of the gospel; but, on the contrary, always opposed those who did?

3. Why do you not throw away all the hymn books now in use, for they were all put out by missionary men, and abound with missionary hymns, such as this, viz:

> "Go, Missionary and proclaim
> The kind Redeemer you have found;
> Publish his ever-precious name,
> To all the wond'ring nations round." &c.

4. Now how would you anti-missionary brethren have this hymn? Would you have it to read thus? viz:

> "Stop, Missionary, don't proclaim
> The kind Redeemer you have found
> Publish not his glorious name,
> To all the wond'ring nations round." &c.

5. How do you think this would sound, bursting forth from the hearts and mouths of a congregation of Christians? It would certainly sound oddly enough; but to be consistent with yourselves you ought to have your anti-missionary hymns and prayers, as well as your anti-missionary sermons.

6. Do you think that those brethren can be actuated by a good spirit, who are always urging a separation among the Baptists—always urging a non-fellowship?

7. For the Lord's sake, and for the peace of the churches, ought we not all to be willing to live and let live?

B. Yes, we ought, my dear brother; here we agree exactly.

A. And I hope we shall always agree in this particular; for it has always been a great grief to me to hear any one urging a non-fellowship, and a separation on account of things which ought not to disturb our fellowship. If I think it is my duty to give, let me enjoy the liberty of my conscience; and if you *do not* think it your duty to give, I am willing to let you enjoy the liberty of your conscience.

B. I hope so too. Farewell—may the Lord bless you.

A. Farewell, my brother—the Lord bless you too, and teach us all our duty, is my prayer.

B. } Amen.
A. }

No. 140.

THE SUBSTANCE

OF

MRS. WADE'S ADDRESSES

TO THE LADIES

OF THE BAPTIST CHURCHES IN PHILADELPHIA.

REPORTED BY

MRS. I. M. ALLEN.

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Most of those who may read this address probably already know that in May, 1833, Mr. and Mrs. Wade, missionaries to Burmah, returned to America in consequence of his health having been entirely prostrated by severe labor in a warm climate; so that not only was his usefulness suspended, but the immediate termination of his life almost certain, unless a voyage at sea and cessation from labor could restore him. They also brought with them two native converts, a Burman and Karen, who may justly be regarded as living witnesses to the power of Christianity. The whole company visited many of the churches in different sections of the country, with a view of encouraging those who were laboring to support missions among the heathen, and of inciting all to increased exertion in the holy cause. After spending more than a year in this country, Mr. Wade's health having greatly improved, they embarked again for Burmah, and several additional missionaries with them. During their visit in Philadelphia, Mrs. Wade, as she also did in other places, addressed the females in meetings held for that purpose; it being utterly impracticable for the great numbers who wished to hear some communication from her own lips, to obtain a personal interview. She was requested to prepare the substance of these addresses for the press; but her unavoidable and pressing engagements would not permit. The writer of the following pages has attempted to answer the call repeatedly made that they might be given to the public while the interest excited by Mrs. Wade's interviews was undiminished. How far the attempt has been successful, those who heard her will judge. The manuscript has been submitted to her perusal, and received her sanction as being correct in relation to facts. It has been the aim of the writer to preserve as far as possible her phraseology, and exhibit something of her spirit and manner; but in this last there is doubtless a deficiency which must be regretted. It is presumed that few among us possess her spirit, and we are not therefore capable of embodying it in language. Though delicacy forbids us to say what our hearts would dictate of this devoted missionary, we cannot forbear expressing a wish that every Christian female possessed her self-sacrificing, yet sweet and cheerful spirit of piety. Let the reader of this address who has not had the privilege of seeing the dear sister from whom it originated, imagine her to occupy some convenient position in a house of worship, with a dense, attentive throng of females gathered before her, her face beaming with Christian affection and heavenly devotedness, her attire simple, and of cheap material, yet neat and becoming, and far from being affectedly singular, and in a clear, pleasant voice uttering the following appeal with all the feeling which an actual observation of what she communicates would naturally inspire.

THE SUBSTANCE

OF

MRS. WADE'S ADDRESSES.

It is perhaps known to most of you, my sisters, that the last ten years of my life have been spent among the benighted and degraded heathen. During this period, I have been in several different countries, and had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the customs and modes of worship in each. Before I had witnessed the superstitions, the cruelties, and the debased habits of a heathen people, I could not fully credit the accounts I read from those who had; I thought they must be exaggerated, or could not apply generally to whole communities. But on heathen ground I have been led to exclaim, "The half was not told me." What I now relate will be facts which have come under my own observation—what I have seen and heard.

You have all doubtless heard of the cruelties and abominations connected with the idolatrous worship of Hindostan, and the wretched, degraded condition of its inhabitants. As I spent two or three years among the Hindoos, I unavoidably saw more of this than can be described. The car of their idol, Juggernaut, a huge structure rolled on ponderous wheels, crushes beneath its weight numbers of victims who prostrate themselves before it, that they may thus be sacrificed to the god. Immense numbers perform long pilgrimages of many hundred miles, to pay him honor, sometimes measuring the distance by continually prostrating themselves at length on the ground. Multitudes inflict upon themselves the most excruciating tortures to propitiate their gods—such as having a large iron hook fastened in their back, from which they hang suspended, and swing, &c. Infants are frequently cast into the river Ganges, which they consider sacred, as an offering, and many are destroyed in other ways. I have not myself *attended* the burning of a widow on the funeral

pile of her husband, for I could not endure the spectacle. But such occurrences have repeatedly taken place very near us. The sick and the aged are carried out by their relatives, and left in the open air on the bank of the Ganges to perish without care or kindness; and jackals and vultures often begin to prey upon them while they are alive. The remains of a dead mother may sometimes be seen exposed on the road to Juggernath, while a living infant is lying by her side, and no passer-by takes pity upon it. Every kind of vice is practised in this country without shame. Lying, theft, and robbery are not considered disgraceful. The most indecent and licentious practices are taught in their religious books, as part of the worship of their gods; and are shamelessly committed in the sacred temples. It is not surprising then, that the same abominations universally abound among all classes.

The abject, miserable condition of *females* in heathen countries can scarcely be conceived of in christianized communities. From her childhood, the Hindoo female, with the exception of the lower classes, is entirely confined, being never permitted to go abroad, unless indeed through the displeasure of her male relatives she is thrust out from her home, or otherwise deprived of resources, and compelled to seek her own subsistence. If she even venture to peep out from her miserable habitation, she incurs the anger of her jealous husband, or rather tyrannical lord, and perhaps receives a cruel beating. Through life she is his degraded slave, and at his death she is expected to burn herself on the funeral pile with his body. If she refuse to do this, infamy and abuse are her portion; and she generally prefers an *honorable* death, to an ignominious and wretched life. So servile is her condition, that if she were to refuse to submit to the will of her lord, or utter a complaint, or attempt to avoid the evils of her lot, she would surely meet with abuse from all her male relations—father, husband, brothers, sons—all conspire to hold her in degradation and bondage. So contemptible are females in the estimation of the other sex, and so well does the mother know the mode of life to which her daughter is introduced, that the birth of a female infant is considered by all a misfortune. By the father and brothers it is looked upon with detestation; by the mother, to

say the best, with commiseration. If it is not sacrificed, or in some way put to death by its unnatural parents, that they may rid themselves of the trouble of taking care of it, which is a very common practice in regard to all infants—the little girl is through childhood a neglected being—left without clothing and without culture, and is finally consigned to the same miserable lot which had been her mother's. No wonder that mothers so untaught, so debased, should be without natural affection. And they are every where found abusing their children and exposing them to all kinds of danger and cruelty.

This is a very imperfect view of the superstitions and cruelties abounding in Hindostan; but I have said enough to shew you that the people there are awfully degraded. Let us however, my sisters, rejoice that there is a bright side to this gloomy picture. Though thousands and millions of the poor deluded Hindoos are still practising the cruelties and living in all the moral wretchedness I have described, yet this is not the case with all. The blessed gospel which for some years missionaries have preached among them, is now producing a cheering influence in various directions. Many are praising God for the happy change it has effected even in their temporal circumstances —the introduction of peace and comfort into the domestic circle, &c. and especially for the glorious hopes and prospects it has opened to them beyond the grave. In Calcutta and the neighboring villages, in Monghyr, Dinapore, and even in the dark province of Orissa, little churches of converted Hindoos have been gathered; and if Christians will do their duty and send an adequate supply of missionaries, Bibles and tracts, I doubt not these churches will multiply, and converts become numerous as "the drops of morning dew."

Within the last two or three years the Suttee, or burning of widows on the funeral pile of their husbands, has been abolished by the English government, in all that portion of the country under their jurisdiction. So that though there is still a strong prejudice among the natives in favor of this cruel rite, it is hoped that it will soon cease to be practised among them.

But it is in *Burmah* that the greater portion of my missionary life has been spent. That country contains a

population considerably greater than the whole of these United States, and is under a government wholly despotic. Life and property are held at the will of the ruling powers. The people are subject to every oppression from those in authority. If a man has property, he conceals it and appears poor, lest some superior should covet his possessions, throw him into prison, and seize all he has. Crimes of every kind are as prevalent, and attended with as little disgrace, as in Hindostan. Indeed, he who can lie or steal most adroitly, without detection by the government, is admired by his countrymen. If he is detected, some penalty is inflicted upon him, unless he has money to bribe the officers, in which case he can commit any crime with impunity. Hence the Burmans have no confidence in each other; as there is no integrity among them, so there is no trust. It is true that in that country immorality is not inculcated as part of their religious worship; on the contrary, they have a tolerably correct system of morals in their sacred books. But there is no healthful influence in society, nothing in public opinion, to enforce its practice. Custom sanctions licentiousness of every description; the commission of the worst vices does not degrade one in the estimation of others. Think what must be the condition of an entire country more deeply sunk in iniquity than the most polluted sections of your large cities, and where no surrounding restraints are imposed upon the outbreakings of sin. A form of marriage is in use, but there is also a form of separation; so that there are continually occurring marriages and separations. The results of such a state of things can only be imagined. Parents care little for their children, but often unmercifully beat and abandon them; and fathers and husbands sell wives and children as slaves, whenever they have occasion to avail themselves of the profits of such a sale. Mothers, too, will do this. I have very frequently seen a mother apparently fond of her child and caressing it one hour, and the next beating it cruelly, or have known of her selling it into slavery. And this inhumanity is not confined to the outcasts of society, among whom such conduct might be found even in this country; it is common, and not disreputable. Infants are not drowned or otherwise sacrificed, as a religious rite, by the Burmans, but

they are sometimes destroyed by their unnatural parents. Females are not confined within doors among them as they are in Hindostan, but they are taught nothing, are kept without clothing in childhood, are treated with contempt through life, and employed in the most servile labors. The miserable habitations of these degraded people exhibit the most forlorn and loathsome appearance. Domestic comfort is unknown among them.

The *religion* of the Burmans is absurd in the extreme, and devoid of all motive to a correct life, and all consolation in death. The object of their worship is Gaudama, a being who they say appeared in our world about two thousand four hundred years ago. He had existed in various states, as man, beast, reptile, demi-god, &c. before he arrived at the most exalted merit; and now he has attained the highest good they have any idea of—that is, annihilation. *To cease to be*, is the summit of all their hopes. They worship Gaudama, only because they consider him to have attained superior merit, not because he is the creator or governor of the world, which they believe to have come into existence itself. They have no idea of an eternal God, the Creator of all things, but believe that all matter is self-existent. They suppose that all mankind pass through what they call "an endless whirlpool of transmigration"—that is, that when they die out of one state, they are born into another; he that is now a man may next become a beast, afterward a reptile, then a man again, or a woman, &c. And so great a misfortune is it to be a female, that the sex pray to become men in the next state. It is often thought in Christian countries, that the heathen have no knowledge of right and wrong, and are not therefore accountable for their actions. They indeed have no knowledge of God's revealed word or of a Saviour, and consequently are not guilty for not 'believing on him of whom they have not heard." But they do know the distinction between right and wrong in their dealings with each other, as well as we do. The sacred books of the Burmans prohibit lying, theft, adultery, the use of spirituous liquors, &c. and this is well known by the people. They believe in a future existence, where all the sin they have committed will be punished. They are without expectation of forgiveness, but

believe that for every sin they must suffer for ages. Yet notwithstanding this, they go on through life, adding iniquity unto iniquity. They say, that after living in many different states and forms, and suffering ages of punishment for every sin, they shall then enjoy happiness in proportion to the merit they may have acquired in this world; and if they have acquired sufficient merit, they may attain, after a long period, to a divine state, and then to annihilation, their highest hope. Looking forward, as they do, to an existence in the form of various animals, and having no hope of obtaining the forgiveness of their sins, these people generally are greatly distressed at the approach of death. Surely their condition is dark and pitiable. Such as I have described it, though but very faintly and partially, is the life, and such the end of the Burman. A complete picture of his wretchedness, superstition, and degradation, I cannot portray. It must be seen to be realized.

And now, my dear sisters, having told you something of the condition in which we find these poor creatures, I will give you some idea of what has been effected through the blessing of God upon the labors of a few missionaries for their improvement in temporal circumstances, and the salvation of their souls. The mission was commenced twenty years ago. About three years of that time, its operations were entirely suspended by the war which took place between the English and Burmese. It was imagined by the natives that all white foreigners were leagued with the British, in opposition to themselves; and consequently they all, including the missionaries, were arrested and thrown into prison; the greatest confusion prevailed throughout the country, and it was long before confidence and quiet were restored. But leaving out the time in which the work of the mission was suspended, there had not been in the whole remainder, up to the period of our leaving the country, the average labor of *two* missionaries who were preachers, for that vast multitude of people. An additional number have gone out within two or three years; some had arrived before we left. Still, with so few laborers, the language has been acquired; the gospel is continually preached to the people; several tracts and small books have been prepared and circulated

among them; the New Testament translated, printed, and distributed; and if brother Judson's life and health have been spared, the Old Testament is probably now translated and ready for printing. Burman boys are as generally taught to read, in their own schools, as the boys in this country are, though girls are not taught. Consequently, we rarely find a man who cannot read. The demand for books is urgent and increasing. The people are anxious to read and learn what this new religion is. To supply this whole reading nation, exceeding the population of the United States, there are attached to the mission three printers, and four printing presses. The present number of missionaries is six. But who will not exclaim, "What are these among so many?" What supply would six preachers, three printers, and four printing presses be for this country? As the fruit of their labor, the missionaries have had the happiness of seeing four hundred natives giving evidence of piety, and joining the churches at the different stations, besides upwards of a hundred English soldiers. Several have died in the cheering hope of a blissful immortality. A number are now engaged in preaching the gospel to their countrymen, and are valuable aids to the missionaries. A hundred dollars a year is an ample sum for the support of a native preacher, and they will live on considerably less for the sake of carrying the news of a Saviour to their perishing brethren. Sometimes some of the native Christians will get the means of supporting their families a month in advance, by their own efforts, and will then go out in the neighboring country, distributing tracts and conversing with the people. Though they are very poor, they are anxious to make every effort to promote the spread of the gospel, and frequently sacrifice little comforts for this object. Their food is at best simple, being generally rice and curry. But I have known these dear people deny themselves of the latter, and live occasionally upon rice and salt, that they might have a few cents to aid in sending out tracts or preachers, in building a zayat, or for some similar object; and they will carefully save their half cents and quarter cents for the same purpose. O, my sisters, they are lovely Christians indeed, so conscientious, so humble, so grateful for the gospel, to you who have sent it to them, and to the

missionaries who have carried it. It would affect your hearts to hear them pray for you and your children. I commenced a weekly female prayer-meeting some years ago at Maulmein, which all the female members of the church regularly attend. To give all an opportunity of being present, and time for offering their petitions and making any communications that they may wish, the meeting is held through the day, and several attend at a time, and then give place to others. One will take care of the children of several others, that they may attend, and afterward her own are taken care of by another; thus all are found at the meeting in the course of the day, and *all* take part in the exercises. From the time of their first joining the church, they are always ready to try to pray in our meetings—there is no backwardness, no fear. And here, if they have any difficulty or trial, they make it known, and ask for counsel; and if any little misunderstanding or hard feeling has taken place between any of them, it is talked over and settled, that no disturbances may arise. As I had told them that many who contributed to send them the gospel, had children that were not Christians, they agreed to pray for their conversion. My dear sisters, could you hear these Burman sisters, so lately sunk in the utmost degradation, praying for the conversion of your children, your hearts would be melted. When I have heard of the precious revivals of religion in America, and of the number of youth that have been gathered into the church of Christ, I have thought, eternity alone would disclose what proportion of this has been accomplished in answer to these prayers. Indeed, I have enjoyed sweeter seasons at these meetings than I ever did in any meeting in America.—The native Christians, generally, males as well as females, are much in the habit of prayer; it seems to be their delight. Owing to their manner of living, and the slight structure of their houses, they have not convenient opportunities for retirement in the day; and it is not uncommon for them to spend hours of the night in pouring out their hearts in prayer. On my bed, I have frequently heard more or less distinctly, from different directions, several voices thus engaged. They are not ashamed to have it known that they pray; and if they are so circumstanced as to have no other opportunity,

they will kneel in one corner of the room, with their back toward the persons in it, and pray there. When any of them are going out as preachers or to distribute tracts, they come to the missionary, who gives such advice as he considers necessary, and unites with them in prayer; they pray over the tracts for God's blessing upon their distribution, and then go out two and two. The preachers are sometimes absent for a month. From some of these excursions they will return disheartened—they have been opposed, ridiculed, stoned, and have seen no good results from their labors. The missionary encourages them, prays with them, tells them they must not always expect success, &c. and soon they are desirous of going again, when perhaps they will return highly encouraged, bringing others with them to get books and hear more about the new religion. These Christians are always endeavoring to persuade their unconverted friends to embrace the gospel. When three or four meet, their conversation is not about their own affairs, or unprofitable matters, but the interests of their souls. If a few are laboring together in an occupation which allows of conversation, those of the party who are Christians, are sure to be urging upon the others the subject of religion; and will perhaps bring a neighbor thus interested, to the missionary's house at evening worship.—Their Christian affection for each other is very conspicuous, especially in the seasons of communion at the Lord's table. They are very careful to receive that ordinance in the exercise of brotherly love, as well as to seek preparation of heart in every particular, for its proper observance. They would not think it possible that Christians could sit down together at the Lord's supper, with unkind feelings toward each other, or any misunderstanding which would disturb their harmony as brethren. If any little difference has occurred between any of their number, they are sure to seek a reconciliation before the communion season arrives. And they seem during the week previous to the celebration of the ordinance, to endeavor to get into a suitable frame for it. It is cheering to our hearts, and it would be to yours, my sisters, to see such humble, devoted Christians as these dear converts are. I long to return to them, and to that

land of darkness where there are so many perishing for the bread of life, and so few hands ready to bestow it.

The *Karens* are a very interesting people, inhabiting the interior of Burmah, and making the whole number of inhabitants in that empire nearly twice as large as in this country. They have no system of religion, and do not worship idols; when first known by the missionaries had no written language, and of course could not read or write. A few of them can speak and read the Burman language. They have had a tradition that *white foreigners* would sometime bring them the word of the Eternal God; and when they heard of the missionary, brother Boardman, being at Tavoy, they sent a deputation to know whether he had this word.* On hearing that he had, a company were soon sent to him with a book which had somehow found its way to them about twelve years before, and to which they had from that period paid their worship, though they could not read it—wishing to know what it was. It proved to be an English Common Prayer Book. They were easily dissuaded from worshipping the book, and gave it to brother Boardman; and we now have it with us. (The book was here exhibited by Mrs. Wade.) They anxiously desired books which would tell them about God, and begged the teacher, as they call the missionaries, to go out among their people and instruct them. He soon visited them, and as the fruit of his labors, and those of others, about two hundred have given evidence of becoming Christians, and been baptized. It is of their appearance as Christians, that I have spoken as well as of the Burmans. They are equally affectionate, humble, and devoted. They frequently importune us to give them the Bible, or some book which will instruct them respecting our religion. But when we became acquainted with them, we did not know their language; and after learning it sufficiently, we found that we must form an alphabet and reduce it to writing; and then translate and print books, before they could be put into their hands. Some small books have already been prepared; but we are obliged to tell them that it must be some time before we can give them the Bible, that other missionaries must come out to help us

* See hymn on the last page of the cover.

and they will be obliged to learn the language before they can translate the Bible, and thus it will be years before they can have it. "O," they exclaim, "many of us must go down to our graves and be lost, before that time—do give us something that will tell us about God, before we die." *Many* times we have been obliged to deny books to *Burmans* as well as Karens, when they have come begging for them. Frequently persons living at a distance from us, have accidentally seen a tract, or met with one of the native preachers, in some of their tours, and come to us to hear something more of our religion, and get larger books. After conversing some time, they will say, "I must go home; I live in such a village, and have a good distance to go; now give me a book to carry back, that I may read all you have been telling me when I get home." My dear sisters, you cannot imagine the distress it has caused me, when I have been obliged to say, as I have in a multitude of cases, that *I had not even a tract to give them.* But they would reply, "We cannot remember all you have told us, we shall forget it when we get home—give us a tract, or only one leaf, that we may have it to look at, and remember your instructions." Truly, my friends, in all I have suffered in body or mind, —in parting from my relatives and loved native country, in the privations and dangers of a missionary life—*nothing has caused me such bitter anguish of heart*, as being compelled to send away these poor, perishing, imploring fellow-creatures *without one leaf, containing the words of eternal life.* And this we must do, because we had not the means of printing half the books and tracts, which were anxiously called for. O, how many times have I thought that if Christians in America could see this immense population destitute of the word of salvation, yet having in many instances heard enough to lead them to seek after it, when not a leaf could be furnished for want of the necessary means—they *must* be willing to make sacrifices, and impart liberally of their substance, to aid in supplying them with the precious volume.

And now, my dear friends, I will tell you the manner in which we live, and how we spend our time in that land of darkness I have been trying to describe. The common houses of the country, and such as the missionaries live

in, are constructed of posts put into the ground so as to form a space of the proper dimensions, and then covered with mats or a kind of basket-work of bamboo, and having similar mats for a floor. The roof is covered with a thatch of leaves, and in the sides is here and there an opening for a window, for we had not a pane of glass in our houses. The house is put up in a few days, and costs from thirty to seventy dollars. It may contain as many rooms as are necessary, partitions being made by the same matting as covers the outside. A bedstead made by the missionary, which saves the sum necessary for a more expensive one, or in its place a little elevation in one corner of a room, of the same material as the house is built of, answers every purpose of convenience for lodging; while two or three chairs and some stools, with a plain table, make up the principal furniture of the habitation. A few dishes of the plainest kind supply our table. Though our houses are furnished in the cheapest, simplest manner, we aim to have them, and to be ourselves, *patterns of neatness* in all respects. It would be an interesting spectacle to you, to take a view of brother Judson in his little dwelling, where all is perfect neatness, yet exceedingly simple; and though cheapness is studied in his accommodations and apparel, the dignity and appearance necessary to secure an influence in society is preserved. He is confided in and respected in the highest degree, by all Europeans who know him, as well as by the natives. The Burmans are exceedingly filthy and disgusting in their habits; hence it is of the first importance that we exhibit to them an example of cleanliness and comfort. And when they embrace Christianity, we immediately see considerable improvement in this respect.

The missionary puts up, at some convenient place, an open building called a zayat, being only a thatched roof supported by posts and having a floor, to which he goes in the morning directly after breakfast, and remains through the day. Here the people are continually stopping to converse with him; he reads from the scriptures and other books, explains to them, and answers their objections, and gives books to those who apply for them Thus many are continually hearing religious truth, and many tracts and books are scattered in various parts of the

country. Great numbers are led to examine the new religion, and visit the missionary to inquire farther respecting it, merely from seeing some of our tracts, and are often in consequence hopefully converted; and in some cases persons have been found giving good evidence of piety, who had never seen a living teacher. While the missionary is thus employed, his wife is at home conversing with females who go to her for advice, instruction, &c. At the close of the day, at the sound of a kind of bell, the family assemble for evening worship, and the native brethren living near, attend, and frequently others who have been persuaded by them in the course of the day, or been at the zayat, and wish to hear more. There are various other duties continually occurring, such as preparing and translating books, oversight of schools, &c. but this is the manner in which our time is generally spent from Monday morning to Saturday night. On Sabbath we have public worship and preaching. And oh, it is a delightful sight, to see the congregation assembled in a neat bamboo meeting-house which they have built themselves, seated on their clean mats, their children with them, all tidy in their appearance, and worshipping God and hearing the gospel with sincerity, humility, gratitude and joy. This compensates us for every toil and suffering.

And now my dear sisters, in view of the wretched, degraded, perishing condition of these poor creatures—in view of the open door for access to them, and the great demand for laborers and means—of the interesting character they exhibit as Christians—and in remembrance of the sufferings of our Divine Redeemer for us, and his last command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel"—shall we not be willing to make every exertion to send them the gospel. Indeed, if you only gave up some of the superfluities of life, without relinquishing one of its comforts, if you would only dispense with elegant articles of furniture, and various ornaments in dress, you might devote large sums of money to this object. Many a five and ten dollar note, and even much larger sums might be spared without the least inconvenience to yourselves. And when you stand before the bar of God, and meet there the benighted Burman and Karen, who sought after the word of the eternal God from Christians, but

could not obtain it, and perished in their darkness, oh, with what feelings will you recollect the many useless gratifications in which you indulged, when these precious souls were dying by thousands without the knowledge of a Saviour! Shall I return to that dear people, and refuse *one* who has come many miles to get a book which would tell him how he could be saved, refuse him *even a single leaf*, because we have not the money which will enable us to print books?

Support of Native Preachers in Burmah.

It will be observed that Mrs. Wade states in her communications, that a Burman or Karen preacher can be supported at an annual expense of one hundred dollars at most, and that they often live on a less sum, and devote themselves to preaching the gospel. The Karen who has just visited this country, has sustained his family on four or six dollars a month, while he has been laboring to spread the news of salvation among his countrymen. In several instances, individuals and churches in this country have assumed the charge of supporting some one of these preachers, engaging to pay the requisite sum annually. How many others might be found abundantly able to make this additional effort in the cause of holy benevolence, without one sacrifice of real comfort. Many persons in moderate circumstances might give far more in aid of missionary operations than they have heretofore done, by laying aside at short intervals, a *small sum*, which at the close of the year will be found to have accumulated to an amount they could not perhaps, without inconvenience, spare at one time. The writer is acquainted with several individuals, some of whom have only limited pecuniary means, who in consequence of hearing Mrs. Wade's appeals, and being desirous of increasing their contributions to the cause to which she is devoted, have pledged themselves to lay aside weekly the sum of twelve and a half cents for the support of a Karen preacher. A few persons can in this way accomplish the object; and who can predict the amount of good which may result? Christian sisters, will you not form little associations on a similar plan, for this or some kindred object; and if others cannot be induced to unite in it, let each one resolve to adopt it *herself*.

No. 119.

THE VINEYARD.

A PARABLE.

A CERTAIN man, on the settlement of a new territory, purchased an extensive estate; and being about to remove for a considerable time from his possession, directed his servants to clear and to cultivate it. The soil was rich, and capable of very general productiveness; but the will of the owner was, that the attention of his servants should be given to the culture of *the vine*. He accordingly left them written instructions to cultivate each one a *vineyard*. For many years this practice was continued by them, up to the very letter of their instructions. But, in process of time, other settlers located themselves around; and intercourse with them became inevitable; the language, and thoughts, and manners of the settlers, became, in a great degree, one. By degrees the spoken language varied, in the meaning of some of its terms, from what *was* the spoken language when the estate in question was purchased. This was the case with the term 'vineyard.' At first, the *vineyard* was the only cultivated portion of the territory, and 'vineyard' and 'plantation' were synonymous terms. When other settlers began to cultivate the soil, they, almost necessarily, adopted the language of the first settlers, though their pursuits were different. They all cultivated the soil, and therefore all were said to have *vineyards;* yet some had only part of their land planted with the vine, or grape, and some with melons, and some with cucumbers, and some even with corn and olives. After a while, the servants of the first settler fell into the adoption of the modes of thought, and habits of speech, of their new neighbors, and honestly supposed that they were doing the will of their master in mingling the culture of the grape with that of the melon and cucumber, and also with that of corn and the olive. After the lapse of a still further period, the culture of the vine fell into very general disuse among them, and was almost entirely abandoned for that of corn and olives. Yet to their corn and olive plantations, they continued to ap-

ply the name of *vineyard.* To one of these servants of the original settler, it occurred, that perhaps the course which had been pursued by the generality of his fellow servants, would not meet the approbation of their master; and he, accordingly, remonstrated with them on the impropriety of their conduct. They thought him unnecessarily scrupulous; and alleged that words were the signs of ideas, and that the word 'vineyard' now signified 'any cultivated portion of land;' and therefore, though the culture of the vine or grape had been neglected, they had yet cultivated each his respective vineyard or plantation of corn, or olives, or melons, or cucumbers, and that the culture of these was not expressly forbidden. They added, moreover, that they did not question his (the remonstrant's) plantation being a vineyard, as, indeed, they could not; for he had nothing under culture but the grape; and they urged on him, most vehemently, not to question that their plantations were 'vineyards' also, though the grape was not one of their productions. He admitted that *now* the word 'vineyard' did suggest the idea of any cultivated portion of land; because the spoken language of the settlers had become somewhat different from what it originally was: He reminded them that the will of their master was to be sought, not in the meaning they now put upon terms, but in that which was originally attached to them. To ascertain this, he referred them to the written instructions left them by their master; and endeavored to convince them that they did not obey the instructions which were originally given to them; but attached another meaning than their master had attached to the words in which he had expressed his will. In proof of this, he referred them to other portions of the 'instructions;' viz. such as speak of the vintage, the wine vat, and the press, &c. &c. and concluded by saying that he was so convinced of the importance of his master's approbation, that he, at least, was determined to obey him exactly. If it were even the case that the master would own their respective plantations as vineyards, (of which he, the remonstrant, was by no means sure,) he was at least sure that *that* plantation would be owned by him as a vineyard, where only the grape was cultivated. He concluded, therefore, that whatever

risk his fellow servants might choose to run, he, for his part, would cultivate, what not only he, but they also, were SURE was a VINEYARD.

Now, reader, though the above is all a parable, it may be made the means of giving valuable instruction on an important portion of revealed truth. By the original settler, in the above parable, is intended, the Lord Jesus Christ; by the servants to whom he committed the culture of his purchased possessions, the apostles and their successors in the ministerial office; by the instructions left on record, to teach them the will of their master respecting the culture they were to bestow on his land, the Scriptures of truth. With these explanations, you will be prepared for the following exhibition of the truth which this parable is designed to teach.

When our Lord was about to be taken from his disciples, to the glory of the heavenly world, he gave them a brief, but important commission. He introduced that commission, with the solemn declaration that he was made Head over all things to the church militant, and triumphant: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth;" and having thus shown them the basis of authority on which his command rested, he proceeded to the utterance of the command itself: "Go ye, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

The apostles recognized the authority of Christ, and acted agreeably to their commission; "they went everywhere, *preaching the word*," and thus "teaching all nations;" those who received their instructions on the fundamental points of their message, *were baptized*, and then *instructed* more in detail, "*in all things* whatsoever the Lord had commanded." Thus the commission of the Lord to the apostles was fulfilled, and that in the precise order of prescription; for we read what was the instruction first communicated in Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost; what course was pursued towards those who received it, viz. "they were baptized," and what was their subsequent course; "they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine, *under the instruction of the apostles*," in the discharge of the

duties of church members, (i. e. "in breaking of bread,") and in those of private Christians, ("and in prayers.")

Such was the practice of the first regularly organized church of Christ, after his departure from the world; and such continued to be the practice of the church for several ages,* at least as far as regards the ordinance of baptism. It was administered to none but professed believers, nor in any other mode than by immersion; and never till it was administered, was the convert received into the fellowship of the church, nor to a participation of the ordinance referred to, in the above quotation, by the expression, "breaking of bread."

The parable may be employed as an appropriate illustration relative to both the mode and subjects of baptism. With respect to the mode of baptism, in these days, we hear of "baptism by immersion," "baptism by sprinkling," and "baptism by affusion, or pouring;" but from the beginning it was not so. There was one leading, prominent signification of the word: and that signification was attached to it when the commission was given: consequently, in the first ages of the church, the recipients of this rite were "*buried* by baptism." But the question arises, How came any other mode to be adopted? For a full answer to the question, the reader is referred to Robinson's History of Baptism; and here the following brief account must suffice. In the early history of all nations, we find a profusion of figures employed in their language; and it is so in the history of the christian church; where occur figures of speech arising out of the instituted order of things in the Christian church, and some of these figures have relation to baptism. Because that ordinance was not administered till the recipient of it was regenerate, it was called the laver of regeneration; and after a while was still further abbreviated, so as that baptism was called regeneration. Still, however, it was understood as figurative; and no injury was derived to the church by any alteration of the ordinance from the form in which it had been originally delivered to her. But after the lapse of a further period, when the generation who first used the figure in this abbreviated form, had gone to their rest,

* See Note A

the language began to be viewed in such a connexion with one portion of divine truth, as to disturb, seriously, the minds of some whose consciences were tender, and whose judgments weak. It is said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Now "born again" and "regenerated" are terms of similar import; but by a change in the signification of words, "regenerated" had come to signify "baptized," and thus the following interpretation was put upon the passage, "Except a man be *baptized*, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Now it might sometimes occur that persons in sickness should be converted to God, and baptism would be, to them, impractible; i. e. immersion would be so. Yet, in the mistaken apprehension of the age, baptism was essential to salvation; in order, therefore, to save the soul, another religious application of water, (sprinkling or pouring,) was substituted for immersion, while yet the *name* of baptism was applied to it. This other application of water, it is true, was not considered valid baptism in the age in which it was introduced, if the sick person recovered; he was, in that case, required to be baptized, i. e. *immersed*.

From some such cause as this, the term baptism came to be used for sprinkling or pouring, and after the lapse of years or ages, the error became so venerable, that the name which was at first given by complaisance to sprinkling or pouring, in process of time, was *claimed* for it, and such religious application of water was declared *to be* baptism.

The Baptists, indeed, like the servant in the parable, remonstrate with their fellow servants or fellow Christions in relation to the subject, and express their doubts as to the propriety of their conduct, and its accordance with their Lord's will. They are thought, as he was, to be unnecessarily scrupulous; and are told that baptism now signifies any religious application of water, in the name of the Trinity; and that, therefore, though *immersion* is neglected by all other denominations, yet each and all of them practise *baptism*, though some do it by sprinkling, and some by pouring, and some use both of these, and add immersion to them. It is, indeed, conceded to the Baptists by their fellow Christians of other denominations, that their

practice, immersion, *is baptism;* for this cannot be denied; but they are urged not to question that pouring or sprinkling is baptism also, though plainly neither of them is immersion. In reply, they admit that *now* the word baptism is used for any application of water; because in this word our spoken language is different in signification from that of the first Christians; but they contend, as their representative in the parable did, that the meaning our Lord attached to the word is to be learned, not from the sense now attached to it, but from that which was originally conveyed by it. To ascertain this, they refer to other portions of the sacred volume, which have relation to the same subject; to such as refer to "going down into," and "coming up out of the water," "being buried by baptism;" a place being chosen where "there was much water;" its being compared to the deluge, which drowned the old world, &c. They profess not to have any right to force their own opinions on the acceptance of their fellow Christians; but only urge them to search the scriptures on the subject. They attach so much importance to the full and unreserved approbation of their Lord, that, though they will not, and dare not question the sincerity of their fellow Christians who differ from them on the subject of baptism, they feel that *they* must observe the ordinances "*as they were delivered;*" and whether others are to be considered as baptized or unbaptized, *their* course must be such as that there be no question whether they are baptized.

As it regards the subjects of baptism. It is no less clear that, originally, this ordinance was administered to none but believers, than that it was administered in no other mode than immersion. The commission required the apostles *first*, to teach; *secondly*, to baptize those who were taught; and *thirdly*, to carry on the work of instruction so as to embrace ALL THINGS whatsoever their Lord had commanded them.

Now it is obvious that in order to persons being taught, they must have arrived at an age when they can receive ideas, and therefore must have advanced beyond the period of infancy. Nor can this be invalidated by any reference to baptism of households; for in the cases of all baptized households, it is asserted of them, that they did or enjoyed what is impossible

to infants, viz. "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints," "believed," "rejoiced," "were comforted," &c.* Again, repentance and faith were uniformly required of such as received the word, prior to their admission to the ordinance of baptism; and its absence would have been considered a sufficient reason for refusing that ordinance to an applicant. "If thou believest thou mayest," plainly implies, "unless thou believest, thou mayest not." Now as infants not only *do not*, but *cannot* believe, they may not be admitted to the ordinance. It is useless and irrelevant to talk of the faith of parents or sponsors; the requirement of *personal* repentance, &c. excludes it. "Repent and be baptized *each one* (ἑκαστος ὑμων) of you," is the command, and one which infants *cannot* obey.

Here also, as in the former case, a question arises. How came the ordinance, which was evidently designed only for believers, to be administered to infants, to whom faith is impossible? In answer to this inquiry, it is only necessary to recur to what was before said of the use of figurative language in relation to the ordinance of baptism. Sickness was not confined to unbaptized adults; but infants, also, were often sick, and sometimes died. Now the interpretation which had been put on John iii. 3, 5, in consequence of the words "baptism" and "regeneration" having become almost convertible terms, led many to fear for the safety of the souls of such infants. Parental tenderness endeavored to provide for the safety of such as should die in infancy, and therefore infants in health were immersed that they might enter the kingdon of heaven, and infants in sickness were treated as adults in similar circumstances, i. e. sprinkled. Now to this practice, Baptists, like their representative in the parable, object. They allege that baptism is the door of entrance into the church, and that none are now to be permitted to pass it, but such as originally did so; i. e. subjects of *personal* repentance and faith. They appeal to the "book of instructions," and show, not only that baptism was to be administered to such only as believed; but that those to whom it was administered were "to observe all things whatsoever the Lord com-

* 1 Cor. xvi. 15. Acts xvi. 34, 40.

manded,"—and among them the Lord's supper. They contend, therefore, that either baptism *should not* be administered to infants, or that these infants *should* commune at the Lord's table; but as the latter *is not* practised by any denomination, so the former *should not* be practised.

Their fellow Christians allege, in reply, that infants are not forbidden to be baptized, and therefore it cannot be improper to administer it to them. To this the Baptists reply, "But who hath *required* this at your hand?" for if not required, it will not be accepted. May we substitute water for wine, in the Lord's supper? Yet this is not *forbidden.* Is not the argument as strong for its introduction, as for the admission of infants for baptism?

Finally, it is admitted that, in the first age of the Christian church, baptism was administered only to such as professed personal repentance and faith; this was the "one baptism" of the primitive church; and as the "book of instructions" requires us to "keep the ordinances *as they were delivered* to us," we are not at liberty to alter them.

In conclusion, dear reader, bear in mind your relation to the Lord of the vineyard. In the first place, see to it that you are found working in it; that you are a partaker of real vital godliness; that you are renewed in spirit by the agency of the Holy Spirit, and pardoned through the blood of Jesus Christ. Having ascertained these points, for your future and farther instruction, betake yourself to the Scriptures of truth; and yield implicit obedience to their directions. Ascertain from them what kind of churches the apostles planted, and join yourself to such a church. See if any except baptized believers, were associated in church fellowship; if any communed at the Lord's table who were not baptized, i. e. immersed; if any were baptized, except upon profession of *personal* repentance and *personal* faith; and having seen these things in the light of revelation, beware how you follow the sparks which human wisdom or human authority have kindled. The Lord given you his instructions, and has commanded you "to keep the ordinances *as they were delivered;*" his second coming draweth nigh, and then "happy shall that servant be, who is found so DOING."

No. 126.

VINDICATION

OF

THE BAPTISTS

FROM THE CHARGE OF BIGOTRY

IN REFUSING

COMMUNION AT THE LORD'S TABLE TO PÆDOBAPTISTS.

BY ABRAHAM BOOTH.

Abridged for the Baptist General Tract Society.

There is—one Baptism. *Ephes.* iv.
They who are not rightly baptized, are, doubtless, not baptized at all. *Tertullian.*
No unbaptized person communicates at the Lord s Table. *Theophylact.*

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PREFACE.

It was not a fondness for controversy, but a desire to vindicate the honor of Christ, as lawgiver in his own kingdom; to assert the scriptural importance of a positive institution in the house of God; and to exculpate himself, together with a great majority of his brethren of the Baptist persuasion, from charges of an odious kind, that excited the author to compose and publish the following pages. If these designs be answered, the writer obtains his end; and if not, he has the testimony of his own conscience to the uprightness of his intentions.

As we are expressly commanded to "contend earnestly for the *Faith* once delivered to the saints;" it can hardly be questioned, whether a sincere concern for the purity and permanence of our *Lord's appointments* in the gospel church, be not an indispensable duty. For they are no less the expressions of his *dominion over us*, than of his love to us; no less intended as means of his *own glory*, than of our happiness. The subject, therefore, that is here presented to the reader's notice, though not of the *greatest*, yet is far from being of small importance in the Christian religion.

It is entirely on the *defensive* that the author takes up his pen; for had not the principles and practice of *Baptists* been severely censured, these pages would never have seen the light.

That *He* who is King in Zion may reign in the hearts and regulate the worship of all his professing people; that the Spirit of wisdom, of holiness, and of peace, may dwell in all the churches of Christ; and that the same divine Agent may direct the reader's inquiries after truth, engage his affections in the performance of duty, and enable him to "walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless;" is the sincere desire and fervent prayer of his willing servant in the gospel of Christ,

A. BOOTH.

Goodman's Fields,
March 3, 1778.

BOOTH'S

VINDICATION OF THE BAPTISTS.

SECTION I.

Baptists not chargeable with laying an unwarrantable Stress on the Ordinance of Baptism.

Many reflections are cast on the Baptists, and various charges are laid against them; of such a kind, as greatly impeach the truth of their doctrinal principles, and the candor of their Christian temper. They are frequently represented as *uncharitably rigid*, as *incorrigible bigots* to a favorite opinion, and as putting baptism in the place of our Lord's *atoning blood* and the *sanctifying agency* of the Divine Spirit.

But why such unfriendly surmises and bold accusations? What is there in our principles or conduct, to authorize such hard suspicions, and such severity of censure? As to making baptism a substitute for the *atonement* of Jesus Christ, and the *sanctifying agency* of the Holy Spirit, it is manifestly contrary to our avowed sentiments; so contrary, that all the world, one would have thought, must agree to acquit us of such a charge. For it is too notorious to admit a plea of ignorance in any of our opponents, that we consider no one as a proper subject of that institution, who does not profess repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; who does not, in other words, appear to be in a state of salvation. Nay, so far from making baptism a *saving* ordinance, we do not, we cannot consider any one as a proper subject of it, who looks upon it in that light.

Yet were an imputation of this kind as just as it is groundless; did we really ascribe a regenerating efficacy and saving effects to that sacred appointment; we should hardly forbear concluding, that these complaints and charges come with an ill grace from bre-

thren, especially from the ministry, who declare their assent to all that is contained in the book of Common Prayer. For they, immediately after baptizing an infant, address first the people, and then the omniscient God, in the following remarkable words: 'Seeing, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is REGENERATE and grafted into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks to Almighty God for these benefits—We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to REGENERATE this infant with thy holy spirit, to receive him for THINE OWN CHILD by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy church.'—Thus the clergy most solemnly profess to believe, when they administer baptism to infants. When giving catechetical instructions to children, they inculcate on their tender minds the same things, as truths and facts of great importance. For thus they interrogate each young catechumen, and thus they teach him to answer. 'Who gave you this name? My godfathers and godmothers in my baptism, WHEREIN I WAS MADE a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. How many sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church? Two only, as GENERALLY NECESSARY TO SALVATION, that is to say, baptism and the supper of the Lord. What is the inward and spiritual grace? (i. e. of baptism.) A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; for, being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are HEREBY MADE the children of grace.'* Thus children are taught by the parish minister; and in the firm persuasion of these things they are *confirmed* by the bishop. For, immediately before he lays upon them his episcopal hand, he recognizes, in a solemn address to God, the great blessings supposed to be conferred and received by them at the time of their baptism. Thus he prays: 'Almighty and ever living God, who hast vouchsafed to REGENERATE THESE THY SERVANTS by water and the

* See the office for public baptism of infants, and the catechism. Whether the doctrine here advanced be consistent with the sentiments of Pædobaptists in general, or calculated to instruct the ignorant and edify believers, I must leave the reader to judge.

Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them FORGIVENESS OF ALL THEIR SINS.'—And, after imposition of hands; 'We make our humble supplications unto thee [the divine Majesty] for these thy servants, upon whom (after the example of thy holy apostles) we have now laid our hands to CERTIFY THEM (by this sign) OF THY FAVOR AND GRACIOUS GOODNESS TOWARDS THEM.' Once more; as the church of England suggests a *painful doubt*, relating to the final happiness of such infants as die without baptism; so she *absolutely forbids* her Burial Service to be read over *any* who die unbaptized; placing them, in this respect, on a level with those that die under a sentence of excommunication for the most enormous crimes, or are guilty of *suicide*. For thus she instructs her members, and thus she directs her ministers: 'It is certain by God's word, that children which are *baptized*, dying before they commit actual sin, are *undoubtedly saved*—Here it is to be NOTED, that the office ensuing [i. e. the burial office] is not to be used for any that die UNBAPTIZED, or EXCOMMUNICATE, or HAVE LAID VIOLENT HANDS UPON THEMSELVES.'* Nay, so confident is the British National Church of these things being agreeable to the word of God, that she boldly pronounces the following sentence on all who dare to call them in question:—'Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, that the form of God's worship contained in the book of Common Prayer, and administration of the sacraments, containeth *any thing* in it that is repugnant to the scriptures, let him be excommunicated, and not restored but by the bishop of the place, or archbishop, after his repentance and public revocation of such his wicked errors.'† Thus were we really chargeable with representing baptism as a *saving* ordinance, our Episcopal brethren could not consistently lodge a complaint against us on that account.

If we consult the writings of the most eminent

* Order for Confirmation, at the conclusion of the office for public baptism of infants, and Rubric prefixed to order for burial of the dead.

† Constitutions and Cannons, No. IV.—Similar to this, is that anathematizing decree established by the Council of Trent. Seff. VII. Can. V. If any one shall assert, that baptism is free, or *not necessary to salvation*, let him be accursed

preachers among the Methodists, we shall find, that their sentiments harmonize with the doctrine of the National Church, in regard to the efficacy and absolute necessity of baptism. The late pious and extensively useful Mr. George Whitefield thus expresses his views of the subjects before us:—'Does not this verse [John iii. 5.] urge the *absolute necessity* of water baptism? *Yes*, when it may be had; but how God will deal with persons unbaptized we cannot tell. What have we to do to judge those that are without?'* Had our Methodist brethren met with language and sentiment like these in any of *our* publications, they would, undoubtedly, have thought themselves warranted in using their utmost efforts to expose the dangerous error, and to guard their hearers against us, as making *a Saviour* of baptism. But while *some* of them, have solemnly professed their cordial consent to the various articles contained in the book of Common Prayer and administration of the sacraments, and while they *all* unite in revering the character of the late Mr. Whitefield, they could not be either candid or consistent in condemning us, were we really chargeable with representing baptism as necessary to salvation.

Mr. John Wesley, enumerating the benefits we receive by being baptized, speaks in the following language:—'By baptism we *enter into covenant with God*, into that *everlasting* covenant, which he hath commanded forever. By baptism we are admitted into the church, and consequently *made members* of Christ, its head.—By baptism we, who were by nature children of wrath, *are made the children of God.* And this regeneration is more than barely being admitted into the church.—By *water*, then, as a means, the water of baptism, we are *regenerated* or *born again.* Baptism doth now save us, if we live answerable thereto; if we repent, believe, and obey the gospel. Supposing this, as it admits us *into the church here*, so *into glory hereafter.*—If infants are guilty of original sin, in the *ordinary* way, *they cannot be saved*, unless this be *washed away by baptism.*'† So Mr. Wesley *teaches;*

* Works, Vol. iv. p. 355—6. † Preservative, p. 146—150.

so, says a learned cardinal, the church has *always believed;* and the Council of Trent *confirms* the whole. In the firm persuasion of this doctrine, Mr. Wesley is also desirous of *settling* the members of his very numerous societies. For these positions are contained in a book, professedly intended to preserve the reader from *unsettled notions in religion.* Now, as I cannot suppose this author imagines, with Dodwell, that infants who die without baptism, are not immortal; I know not whether he choses to lodge them in the *limbus puerorum* of the Papists;* or whether, with Austin, he consigns them over to eternal Damnation; though the one or the other must be the case. For, that millions die without baptism, is an undoubted fact, and that God in favor of such, should be *frequently departing* from the *ordinary* method of his divine procedure, *much oftener* departing from, than acting according to it, is hard to conceive; is absolutely incredible, as it involves a contradiction. Yet, on Mr. Wesley's principles, it must be so, if the generality of those that have died, since baptism was instituted, be not excluded the kingdom of heaven. For he who considers what multitudes of Jews and Heathens have peopled the earth, ever since the Christian dispensation commenced; what an extensive spread Mahomet's imposture has had for more than eleven hundred years; and what numbers of infants die without baptism, even in Christian countries, cannot but conclude, even admitting Pædobaptism to have been practised by the apostles, that a vast majority of deceased infants have left the world without being baptized. Now who could suppose an author and a preacher, that asserts the efficacy and exalts the importance of baptism at this extravagant rate, should charge the Baptists with placing an unlawful dependance on that ordinance? Yet, that he has frequently done so, in his pulpit discourses, if not in his numerous publications, is beyond a doubt; is known to thousands!

We are not conscious of attributing any degree of

* Forbesii instruct. Hist. Theolog. p. 493.

importance to baptism, which our Pædobaptist dissenting brethren do not allow, and for which they do not plead. Do we consider it as a divine appointment, as an institution of Christ, the administration and use of which are to continue to the end of the world? So do they. Do they consider it as an ordinance which, when once rightly administered to a proper subject is never to be repeated? So do we. Do we look upon it as indispensably necessary to communion at the Lord's table? So do they. Do we actually refuse communion to such whom we consider as unbaptized? So do they. No man, considered by them as not baptized, would be admitted to break bread at the Lord's table, in any of their churches; however amiable his character, or how much soever they might esteem him in other respects.

Nor is this a new opinion, or a novel practice: for such has been the sentiment and such the conduct of the Christian church in every age. *Before* the grand Romish apostacy, in the *very depth* of that apostacy, and *since* the Reformation, both at home and abroad; the general practice has been, to receive none but baptized persons to communion at the Lord's table. The following quotations from ancient and modern writers, relating to this point, may not be improper. Justin Martyr, for instance, when speaking of the Lord's supper, says; 'This food is called by us the Eucharist; of which it is *not lawful* for any to partake, but such as believe the things that are taught by us to be true, and have been *baptized.*'*—Jerom; 'Catechumens cannot commun cate;' i. e. at the Lord's table, they being *unbaptized.*†—Austin, when asserting the absolute necessity of infants receiving the Lord's supper, says; 'of which, certainly, they cannot partake *unless they be baptized.*'‡—Bede informs us, that three young princes among the eastern Saxons, seeing a bishop administer the sacred supper, desired to partake of it, as their deceased and royal father had done. To whom the

* Apolog. II. p. 162. Apud Suicerum, Thes. Ecclesi. Tom. II. col. 1135.

† Catechumeni—communicare non possunt. In cap. VI. Epist. II. ad Corinth.

‡ Quod nisi baptizati non utique possunt. Epis. ad Bonifacium, Epist. CVI.

bishop answered; 'If ye will be washed, or baptized, in the salutary fountain, as your father was, ye may also partake of the Lord's supper, as he did, but if ye despise the former, *ye cannot in any wise* receive the latter.' They replied, 'we will not enter into the fountain, or be baptized; nor have we any need of it; but yet we desire to be refreshed with that bread.' After which the historian tells us, that they importunately requesting, and the bishop resolutely refusing them admission to the holy table, they were so exasperated, as to *banish both him and his out of their kingdom.**—Theopylact; '*No unbaptized person* partakes of the Lord's supper.'—Bonaventure; 'Faith, indeed, is necessary to all the sacraments, but especially to the reception of baptism: because baptism *is the first* among the sacraments, and *the door* of the sacraments.'†

Quotations of this kind might be greatly multiplied: but that none were admitted to the sacred supper in the first ages of the Christian church, before they were baptized, we are assured by various learned writers, well versed in ecclesiastical antiquity. For instance: Frid. Spanheimius asserts, 'That *none but baptized* persons were admitted to the Lord's table.'‡ Lord Chancellor King; 'Baptism was *always precedent* to the Lord's supper; and none were admitted to receive the Eucharist, till they were baptized. This is so obvious to every man, that it needs no proof.'§—Dr. Wall; '*no church* ever gave the communion to *any persons* before they were baptized—*Among all the absurdities that ever were held*, none ever maintained *that*, that any person should partake of the communion *before* he was baptized.'‖—Dr. Doddridge; 'It is certain that Christians in general have always been spoken of, by the most ancient fathers, as baptized persons:—and it is also certain, that as far as our

* Hist. Eccles. Lib. II. Cap. V. p. 63.

† Apud Forbesium, Instruct. Historic. Theolog. lib. X. cap IV. § 9.

‡ Subjecta ad eucharistiam admissa, soli baptizati. Hist. Christian col. 623.

§ Enquiry, Part II. p. 44.

‖ Hist. Infant Bap. Part II. chap. ix.

knowledge of primitive antiquity reaches, *no unbaptized person* received the Lord's supper.'*

That the Protestant churches in general have always agreed in the same sentiment and conduct, is equally evident. Out of many eminent writers that might be mentioned, the following quotations may suffice. Ursinus, asserts; 'That they who are not yet baptized, *should not be admitted to the sacred supper.*'†—Ravenellius, speaking of the Lord's supper, says; 'Baptism *ought to precede;* nor is the holy supper to be administered to any, *except they be baptized.*'‡—Zanchius; 'We believe that baptism, as a sacrament appointed by Christ, *is absolutely necessary* in the church.''§—Hoornbeekius; '*No one* is admitted to the sacred supper, *unless he is baptized.*'||—Turrettinus; 'It is one thing to have a right to those external ordinances of the church, which belong to a profession; and it is another to be interested in the internal blessings of faith. Unbaptized believers have actually a right to *these*, because they are already partakers of Christ and his benefits: though they have not yet a right to *those*, except in observing the appointed order, by *baptism.*'¶ Leydecker; 'Baptism is necessary, not only in a way of expediency, but by virtue of *a divine precept.* They therefore who reject it, *reject the counsel of God against themselves.*'**—Benedict. Pictetus; 'The supper of our Lord ought not to be administered to persons that are *unbaptized:* for before baptism, men are not considered as members of the visible church.'††—Marckius; 'The dying, and the *unbaptized*, are not to be admitted to communion.'‡‡—Mr. Baxter; 'If any should be *so impudent* as to say, it is not the meaning of Christ, that *baptizing* should *immediately*, *without delay*, follow *discipling*, they are confuted by

* Lectures. p. 511.

† Nondum baptizati, ad coenam non sunt admittendi. Corp. Doct. Christ. p. 566

‡ Bibliotheca Sacra, Tom. I. p. 301. § Opera. Tom. VIII. col. 516.

|| Socin. Confut. Tom. III. p. 416.

¶ Institut. Theolog. Tom. III. Loc. XVIII. Quæst. IV. § 10.

** Idea Theolog. p. 225. †† Theolog. Christiana, p. 959, 960.

‡‡ Christ. Theolog. Medulla, p. 406.

the constant example of Scripture. So that I dare say, that this will be out of doubt with all *rational, considerate, impartial* Christians.'*—Once more: Dr. Doddridge thus expresses his views of the subject. 'The law of Christ requires that *all* who believe the gospel should be *baptized*—For any to abstain from baptism, when he knows it is an institution of Christ, and that it is the will of Christ that he should subject himself to it, is such an act of disobedience to his authority, as *is inconsistent with true faith*—How *excellent soever* any man's character is, he must be *baptized* before he can be looked upon as completely a member of the church of Christ.'†

Perfectly conformable to these testimonies, are the *Catechisms* and *Confessions of faith*, that have been published at any time, or by any denomination of Christians: for if the positive institutions of Christ be not entirely omitted, *baptism* is not only always mentioned first, but generally mentioned in such a way, as intimates that it is a prerequisite to the Lord's table. And so, even in our common forms of speaking, if we have occasion to mention both these solemn appointments of our Lord, baptism still has the priority. Thus *generally*, thus *universally*, is it allowed, that baptism is necessary to communion at the Lord's table. Nay, many of our Pædobaptist brethren consider the ordinance in a more important light than we. For they frequently represent it, as *a seal of the covenant of grace;* as *a mean of bringing their infant offspring into covenant with God;* and some of them severely censure us, for leaving our children to the *uncovenanted* mercies of the Most High, merely because we do not baptize them. Expressions and sentiments these, which we neither adopt nor approve; because they *seem* to attribute more to the ordinance, than the sacred scriptures, in our opinion, will warrant.

It appears, then, to be a fact, a stubborn, incontestible fact, that our judgment and conduct, relating to the necessity of baptism in *order to communion*, per-

* Plain Scripture Proof, p. 126.

† Lectures, p. 508, 512. Discourses on Regen. Postscript to pref. p. 12, 13

fectly coincide with the sentiments and practice of all Pædobaptist churches. Nor have I heard of any such church now upon earth, with which we do not, in this respect, agree; for none, of whom I have any intelligence, be their sentiments or modes of worship whatever they may, in regard to other things, admit any to the sacred supper, who have not, in their opinion, been baptized. And, on the other hand, when the *importance* of baptism comes under consideration between us and them, it is manifest, that Pædobaptists in general, ascribe more to it than we, and place a greater dependence upon it. Consequently, neither candor, nor reason, nor justice, will admit that we should be charged, as we have frequently been, with laying an unwarrantable stress upon it.

The point controverted between us and our Pædobaptist brethren, is not, Whether *unbaptized believers* may, according to the laws of Christ, be admitted to communion: for here we have no dispute; but, *What is* baptism, and *who* are the proper subjects of it? In the discussion of these questions there is, indeed, a wide and a very material difference; but in regard to the former we are entirely agreed. Why, then, do our brethren censure us as *uncharitably rigid*, and *incorrigible bigots?* The principal reason seems to be this: They, in general, admit, that *immersion* in the name of the triune God, on a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, is *baptism*, *real baptism;* while our fixed and avowed persuasion will not permit us to allow, that *infant sprinkling*,* though performed with the greatest solemnity, is worthy of the name. Consequently, though they, consistently with their own principles, may receive *us* to communion among them, yet we cannot admit *them* to fellowship with us at the Lord's table, without contradicting our professed sentiments. For it appears to us, on the most deliberate inquiry, that immersion is not a *mere circumstance*, or *a mode* of baptism, but *essential* to the ordinance: so that, in our judgment, he who is not immersed, is

* The reader is desired to observe, that when I make use of the phrase *infant sprinkling*, or any expression of a similar import, it is merely by way of *distinction*—without annexing any secondary, or obnoxious idea to it.

not baptized. This is the principle on which we proceed, in refusing communion to our Pædobaptist brethren, whom, in other respects, we highly esteem, and towards whom we think it our duty to cultivate the most cordial affection. Nor can we suppose but they would act a similar part, were they in our situation. Were they fully persuaded, for instance, that the great Head of the church had not commanded, nor in any way authorized his ministering servants to require a profession of faith *prior* to baptism; and were they equally certain that the ordinance never was administered by the apostles to any but *infants*, nor in any other way than that of *aspersion* or *pouring*, would they not look upon the *immersion of professing believers*, as a quite different thing from baptism? And, were this the case, would they not consider us as unbaptized, and refuse to have communion with us on that account? I am persuaded they would, notwithstanding their affection for any of us, as believers in Jesus Christ. Consequently, if we *be* really culpable in the eyes of our brethren, it is for *denying the validity* of infant baptism; not because we *refuse communion* to Pædobaptists—for an error in our *judgment*, which misleads the conscience; not for perverseness of *temper*, or a want of *love* to the disciples of Christ.

The Lord's supper was not appointed to be a *test* of brotherly love among the people of God; though several objections that are made against us seem to proceed on that supposition. It must be allowed, that as it is a sacred feast and an ordinance of divine worship, mutual Christian affection among communicants at the same table, is very becoming and highly necessary, and so it is in all other branches of social religion. But that sitting down at the holy supper should be considered as *the criterion* of my love to individuals, or to any Christian community, does not appear from the word of God. The supper of our Lord was designed for other and greater purposes. It was intended to teach and exhibit the most interesting of all truths, and the most wonderful of all transactions. The design of the Great Institutor was, that it should be a memorial of God's *love to us*, and of *Immanuel's*

death for us: that, the most astonishing favor ever displayed; *this*, the most stupendous fact that angels ever beheld. Yes, the love of God, in giving his dear, his only Son; and the death of Christ, as our divine substitute and propitiatory sacrifice, are the grand objects we are called to contemplate at the Lord's table.

As to a *proof*, a *substantial proof* of our love to the children of God, it is not given at so cheap and easy a rate, as that of sitting down with them, either occasionally or statedly, at the holy table. Numbers do that, who are very far from loving the disciples of Christ, for the truth's sake. To give real evidence of that heavenly affection, there must be the exercise of such tempers, and the performance of such actions, as require much self-denial; and without which, were we to commune with them ever so often, or talk ever so loudly of candor and a catholic spirit,—we should, after all, be destitute of that *charity*, without which we are "*nothing*." The reader, therefore, will do well to remember, that the *true test* of love to the disciples of Christ, is not a submission to any particular ordinance of public worship; for that is rather an evidence of his love to God and reverence for his authority; but sympathizing with them in their afflictions; feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and taking pleasure in doing them good, whatever their necessities may be. For this I have the authority of our final Judge, who will say to his people, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, for"—what? Ye have manifested your love to the saints and your faith in me, by holding free communion at my table with believers of all denominations? No such thing. But, "I was an hungered, and ye *gave me meat;* I was thirsty, and ye *gave me drink:* I was a stranger, and ye *took me in;* naked, and ye *clothed me;* I was sick, and *ye visited me;* I was in prison, and ye *came unto me.*"

Our opponents often insinuate, that we are more zealous to establish a favorite mode, and make proselytes to our own opinion and party, than to promote the honor of Jesus Christ and the happiness of immortal souls. Were this the case, we should, indeed, be

much to blame, and greatly disgrace our Christian character. 'But why are the Baptists to be thus represented? Do they affirm that the kingdom of Christ is confined to them? that they only have the true religion among them? and that, unless men are of their party, they will not be saved? Do they wish success to none that are employed in the vineyard, but themselves? or say of others, engaged in the same common cause, Master, forbid them, because they follow not with us? On the contrary, do they not profess a warm esteem and affection for all those, of whatever communion, who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and aim to promote his cause in the world? and do they not give proof of this, by holding a friendly correspondence with them as opportunities offer; and by cordially joining them in occasional exercises of public worship? It is not the distinguishing tenet of baptism, how much soever they wish it to prevail, that is the main band that knits them in affection to one another; it is the infinitely nobler consideration of the relation they stand in to Christ as his disciples. They hope, therefore, to be believed when they declare, that they most cordially embrace in the arms of Christian love the friends of Jesus who differ from them in this point; and to be further believed when they add, that they hold the temper and conduct of the furious zealot for baptism, who fails in his allegiance to Christ, and in the charity he owes his fellow Christians, in sovereign contempt.'*

My reader will not here expect a discussion of the mode and subject of Baptism; for it is not that ordinance considered in itself, or as detached from other appointments of Jesus Christ; but the *order* in which it is placed, and the *connexion* in which it stands with the Lord's supper, that are the subject of our inquiry.

* Dr. Stennett's Answer to Mr. Addington, Part II. p. 284, 285.

SECTION II.

The general grounds on which we refuse Communion at the Lord's table, to Pædobaptist believers—Novelty of the Sentiment and Practice of those who plead for Free Communion: and the Inconsistency of such a Conduct with Baptist Principles.

THE following positions are so evidently true, that they will not be disputed:

Our divine Lord, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, is perfectly well qualified to judge what ordinances are proper to be appointed, and what measures are necessary to be pursued, in order to obtain the great design of religion among mankind. Being head over all things to the church, he possesses the highest authority to appoint ordinances of divine worship, and to enact laws for the government of his house, which appointments and laws must bind the subjects of his government in the strictest manner. Having loved the church to the most astonishing degree, even so as to give himself a ransom for her; he must be considered as having made the wisest and the best appointments, as having given the most salutary and perfect laws, with a view to promote her happiness, and as means of his own glory. These laws and ordinances are committed to writing and contained in the Bible; which heavenly volume is the rule of our faith and practice, in things pertaining to religion; our complete and *only* rule, in all things relating to the instituted worship of God and the order of his house. So that we should receive nothing as an article of our creed, which is not contained in it: do nothing as a part of divine worship, not commanded by it; neither omit nor alter any thing that has the sanction of our Lord's appointment. Nor have we any reason to expect, that our divine Lawgiver and sovereign Judge will accept our solemn services, any further than we follow those directions which he has given, without addition, alteration, or diminution. "What thing

soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it;" were the injunctions of Jehovah to the ancient Israelitish church. "Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you;" is the requisition of Jesus Christ to all his ministering servants.*

In the worship of God there cannot be either obedience or faith, unless we regard the divine appointments. Not *obedience;* for that supposes a precept, or what is equivalent to it. Not *faith;* for that requires a promise, or some divine declaration. If then, we act without a command, we have reason to apprehend that God will say to us, as he did to Israel of old, "Who hath required this at your hand?" And, on the contrary, when our divine Sovereign enjoins the performance of any duty, to deliberate is disloyalty; to dispute is rebellion.—'Believers, who really attend to communion with Jesus Christ,' says a judicious author, 'do labor to keep their hearts chaste to him in his ordinances, institutions, and worship. They will receive nothing, practise nothing, own nothing in his worship, but what is of his appointment. They know that from the foundation of the world he never did allow, nor ever will, that in any thing the *will* of the creature should be the *measure* of his honor, or the *principle* of his worship, either as to matter or manner. It was a witty and true sense that one gave of the second commandment; '*Non imago, non simulachrum prohibetur; sed non facies tibi.* It is a *making to ourselves*, an inventing, a finding out ways of worship or means of honoring God, not by him appointed, that is so severely forbidden.'†—'To serve God otherwise than he requireth,' says another learned writer, 'is not to *worship*, but to rob and *mock* him. In God's service, it is a greater sin to do that which we are not to do, than not to do that which we are commanded. This is but a sin of omission; but that a sin of sacrilege and high contempt. In this we charge the law only with difficulty; but in that

* Deut. xii. 32. Matt. xxviii. 20.—Smith's compendious Account of the Form and Order of the Church, p. 15, 16.

† Dr. Owen on Communion with God, p. 170.

with folly. In this we discover our weakness to do the will, but in that we declare our impudence and arrogancy to control the wisdom of God. In this we acknowledge our own insufficiency; in that we deny the all-sufficiency and plenitude of God's own law. We see the absurdity and wickedness of will-worship, when the same man who is to perform the obedience, shall dare to appoint the laws; implying a peremptory purpose of no further observance than may consist with the allowance of his own judgment. Whereas true obedience must be grounded on the *majesty* of the power that commands; not on the *judgment* of the subject, as to the *benefit* of the precept imposed. Divine laws require obedience, not so much from the *quality* of the things commanded as from the *authority* of him that institutes them.'*

That the gospel should be preached to all nations for the obedience of faith; and that, under certain restrictions, they who receive the truth, should be formed into a church state, few can doubt. It is equally clear from the foregoing positions, that it belongs to the supreme prerogative of Jesus Christ, to appoint the terms and conditions on which his people shall have a place in his house and a seat at his table. For we cannot suppose with any appearance of reason, that these conditions are *arbitrary;* or such as every distinct community may think fit to impose. No; a gospel church has no more power to fix the terms of communion, or to set aside those prescribed by Jesus Christ, than to make a rule of faith, or to settle ordinances of divine worship. This is one characteristic of *a church*, as distinguished from *a civil society;* the terms of admission into the *latter* are discretional, provided they do not interfere with any divine law; but those of the *former* are fixed by him who is King in Zion. No congregation of religious professors, therefore, has any authority to make the door of admission into their communion, either straiter, or wider, than Christ himself has made it.†

* Bp. Reynold's Works, p. 163, 422.

† Dr. Ridgley's Body of Divinity, p. 343, Glasgow edit.

—'The original form of this house, [i. e. the church of Christ] was not precarious and uncertain; to be altered, and changed, and broke in upon by man, or by any set of men at pleasure. This would reflect on the wisdom and care, as well as on the steadiness of Christ; who is in his house, as well as in the highest heavens, the steady and the faithful Jesus; the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, and not in the least given to change; but its form is fixed, particularly in the New Testament. Had Moses or any of the elders of Israel, so much power over the tabernacle as to alter or change a pin thereof? and with what face can man pretend to a power to model and alter at pleasure, gospel churches? As if Christ, the true Moses, had forgot, or neglected, to leave with us the pattern of the house.'*

Baptism and the Lord's supper are positive appointments in the Christian church, about which we cannot know any thing, relating to their mode of administration, subject or design, except from the revealed will of their great Institutor. For, as a learned writer observes, "All *positive* duties, or duties made such by institution alone, depend entirely upon the will and declaration of the person, who institutes and ordains them, with respect to the real design and end of them; and consequently, to the due manner of performing them." It behoves us, therefore, well to consider the rule which our Lord has given relating to these ordinances. 'Because we can have *no other* direction in this sort of duties; unless we will have recourse to mere invention, which makes them our *own institutions*, and not the institutions of those who first appointed them.'†

That there is a connexion between the two positive institutions of the New Testament, is manifest from the word of God; and that one of them must be prior to the other, in order of administration, is evident from the nature of things: for a person cannot be baptized and receive the sacred supper at the same instant. Here, then, the question is, (if any doubt may

* Mr. Bragge, on Church Discipline, p. 9. † Bp. Hoadley's Plain Account, p. 3.

be moved on a point so evident, without affronting common sense) which of them has the previous claim on a real convert's obedience? *Baptism* or the *Lord's Supper?* If we appeal to the persuasion and practice of Christians in all nations and in every age, it will clearly appear, that the *former* was universally considered, by the churches of Christ,* as a *divinely appointed* prerequisite for fellowship in the *latter*, till about the middle of the last century, when some few of the Baptists in England began practically to deny it, by defending and practising mixed communion. A sentiment so peculiar, and a conduct so uncommon as their's are in regard to this institution, require to be well supported by the testimony of the Holy Ghost. For were all the Christian churches now in the world asked, except those few that plead for free communion, whether they thought it lawful to admit *unbaptized* believers to fellowship at the Lord's table; there is reason to conclude they would readily unite in that declaration of Paul; "*We have no such custom, neither the churches of God*" that were before us. Yes, considering the *novelty* of their sentiment and conduct, and what a *contradiction* they are to the faith and order of the whole Christian Church;—considering that it never was disputed, so far as I can learn, prior to the sixteenth century, by orthodox or heterodox, by Papists or Protestants, whether *unbaptized* believers should be admitted to the Lord's table; they all agreeing in the contrary practice, however much they differed in matters of equal importance; it may be reasonably expected, and is by us justly demanded, that the rectitude of their conduct who admit unbaptized persons to the supper should be *proved*,

* That there were people of different denominations in the second and third centuries, who pretended a regard to the name of Jesus Christ, and yet rejected baptism, is readily allowed; but then, it may be observed, that many of them had as little esteem for the Lord's supper. Nay, as a learned writer asserts, the generality of them renounced the scriptures themselves. Nor am I ignorant that Socinus, in the latter end of the sixteenth century, considered baptism as an indifferent thing, except in reference to such as are converted from Judaism, Paganism, or Mahometanism; but our brethren with whom I am now concerned will hardly allow, that societies formed on the principles of those ancient corrupters of Christianity, nor yet on those of Socinus, are worthy to be called, *Churches of Christ.* Vid. Suicerum, Thesaur. Eccles. sub voce Βαπτισμα, and Dr. Wall's Hist. Inf. Bap. Part II. Chap. V.

really proved from the records of inspiration. A man may easily show his fondness for novelty, and the deference he pays to his own understanding, by boldly controverting the opinions, and resolutely opposing the practice, of the wisest and the best of men in every age; but, if he would avoid the imputation of arrogance, he must demonstrate that the things he opposes are *vulgar errors*, which have nothing to recommend them but great antiquity and general custom. Our persuasion, therefore, concerning the necessity of baptism as a term of communion, having had the sanction of universal belief and universal practice for almost sixteen hundred years, it lies on our brethren to prove that it is false and unscriptural; and to shew, from the New Testament, that theirs has the stamp of divine authority.

But is it not strange, strange to astonishment, if the scriptures contain their sentiment, and vindicate their conduct, that it never was discovered by any who acknowledge the proper Deity of Jesus Christ, till the latter end of the last century? Long before then, almost every principle of the Christian faith, almost every branch of Christian worship, had been the subject either of learned or unlearned controversy, among such as thought themselves the disciples of Jesus Christ. The Quakers arose, it is well known, about the time when this new sentiment was first adopted in England; and they entirely renounced baptism, as well as the Lord's supper. But, so far as appears, the people of that denomination never supposed, that they who thought it their duty to celebrate the sacred supper, were at liberty to do it *before* they were baptized.—The ingenious author of the *Pilgrim's Progress* was one of the first, in this kingdom, who dared to assert, that the want of baptism *is no bar to communion*, and acted accordingly. The Quakers arising a little before him, proceeded a step further, and entirely cashiered both baptism and the supper of our Lord; looking upon them as *low*, *carnal*, *temporary* appointments. Much respect, I allow, is due to the character of Bunyan. He was an eminent servant of Jesus Christ, and patiently suffered in his Master's

cause. Many of his writings have been greatly useful to the church of God, and some of them, it is probable, will transmit his name with honor to future ages. But yet I cannot persuade myself, that either his judgment or his piety appeared in this bold innovation. The disciples of George Fox, though less conformable to the word of God, acted more consistently with their own principles, than did the justly celebrated dreamer then, or those who practise free communion now.

Some of the Popish missionaries among the Indians have been charged, by respectable authorities, with concealing the doctrine of *the cross* from their hearers, lest they should be tempted to despise the great Founder of the Christian religion, because he made his exit on a gibbet; they are said to have made it their principal aim, to persuade the poor ignorant creatures to be *baptized*, imagining that they would be christianized, by a submission to that ordinance; as if being baptized, and conversion to Jesus Christ, were one and the same thing! What a destructive delusion this! What an impious exaltation of a positive institution, into the place of redeeming blood, and the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit!—But were one of our ministering brethren who plead for free communion, to be sent as a missionary into those parts of the world; he, I presume, would not be in the least danger of thus over-rating baptism, and of depreciating its great institutor. No; he would boldly preach a *crucified* and risen Jesus, as the only foundation of hope for his hearers; and, if the energy of God attended his labors with considerable success, he would think it his duty to lay before such as believed in Christ, what he had learned from the New Testament, relating to a gospel church—its nature and ordinances, its privileges, duties and great utility. In doing of which, he could hardly forbear to mention *baptism*, as an appointment of his divine master: but though he might *mention* it, yet, on his hypothesis, he could not require a submission to it, as previously necessary to their incorporating as a church, and their having communion together at the Lord's table.

He might, indeed, *recommend* it to his young converts, as having something agreeable in it; but if they did not see its propriety; or if, on any other account unknown to him, they did not choose to comply, and yet were desirous of being formed into a church state, and of having communion at the Lord's table; he could not refuse, though not one of them was, or would be baptized. For if it be lawful to admit *one* believer to communion, purely *as a believer*, and without baptism; it cannot be criminal to admit *all* such, if they desire it: that which is proper and right for *one*, being so to *a million*, if they be in the same circumstances. Thus he would gather a church in perfect contrast with those formed by his fellow missionaries. For, while they put baptism in the place of the Saviour, he would reject his command, and lay the ordinance entirely aside: they make it *all* and he make it *nothing*.—And were a narrative of such proceedings to fall into the hands of a Pædo baptist, who had never heard of any that practised, or pleaded, for free communion, what a singular figure it would make in his view! 'A minister of Jesus Christ, he would say, gathering a church among the Indians, and administering the sacred supper, yet all his communicants unbaptized! Strange, indeed!—A Christian minister, called a Baptist, entirely omitting that *very ordinance* from which he takes his denomination! For the Baptists, of all men, are said to love water and to be fond of baptism. It exceeds the bounds of credibility; but, if it be a fact, he is the oddest mortal and the most unaccountable Baptist that ever lived. The ambiguity of his character would be such, that the pen of ecclesiastical history would always be doubtful what to call him, or under what denomination of religious professors to appoint his place!' Such would be the surprise and such the reflections of both the learned and the vulgar, who had not heard of Baptists that plead for free communion; they being the only Christians now in the world, for aught appears, that are capable of realizing such a report.

SECTION III.

Arguments against Free Communion at the Lord's Table.

It must, I think, be allowed, that the *order* and *connexion* of positive appointments in divine worship, depend as much on the sovereign pleasure of the great Legislator, as the appointments themselves; and if so, we are equally bound *to regard* that order and connexion, in their administration, as to observe the appointments at all. Whoever, therefore, objects to that order, or deviates from it, opposes that sovereign authority by which those branches of worship were first instituted.——For instance: Baptism and the Lord's supper, it is allowed on all hands, are *positive* ordinances; and, as such, they depend for their very existence on the sovereign will of God. Consequently, which of them should be administered prior to the other, (as well as, to what persons, in what *way*, and for what *end*) must depend entirely on the will of their divine Author. His determination must fix their order; and his revelation must *guide* our practice.

Here, then, the question is, Has our sovereign Lord revealed his will, in regard to this matter? "To the law and to the testimony—How readest thou?"

To determine the query, we may *first* consider the order of *time*, in which the two positive institutions of the New Testament were appointed. That baptism was an ordinance of God, that submission to it was required, and that it was administered to multitudes, before the sacred supper was heard of, or had an existence, are undeniable facts. There never was a time, since the ministry of our Lord's forerunner commenced, in which it was not the duty of repenting and believing sinners to be baptized. The venerable John, the twelve apostles, and the Son of God incarnate, all united in recommending baptism, at a time when it would have been impious to have eaten bread and drank wine as an ordinance of divine worship. Baptism, therefore, had the *priority*, in point of institu-

tion; which is a presumptive evidence that it has, and ever will have, a *prior claim* on our obedience.

Let us *secondly* consider the order of *words*, in that commission which was given to the ambassadors of Christ. He who is King in Zion, when asserting the plenitude of his legislative authority, and giving direction to his ministering servants, with great solemnity says; "All power is given to me in heaven and earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to *observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*"* Such is the high commission, and such the express command, of Him who is Lord of all, when addressing those that were called to preach his word, and administer his institutions.—Here, it is manifest, the commission and command are, first of all *to teach;* then—what? To *baptize?* or to *administer the Lord's supper?* I leave common sense to determine. A limited commission includes a prohibition of such things as are not contained in it; and positive laws imply their *negative.* For instance: When God commanded Abram to circumcise all his males, he readily concluded, that neither circumcision, nor any rite of a similar nature, was to be administered to his females. And, as our brethren themselves maintain, when Christ commanded that believers should be baptized, without mentioning any others; he tacitly prohibited that ordinance from being administered to *infants;* so, by parity of reason, if the same sovereign Lord commanded, that believers should be baptized —baptized *immediately* after they have made a profession of faith; then he must intend, that the administration of baptism should be *prior* to a reception of the Lord's supper; and, consequently, tacitly *prohibits* every unbaptized person having communion at his table.

Thirdly. The order of administration in the *primitive* and *apostolic practice*, now demands our notice. That the apostles, when endued with power from on

*Matt. xxviii 18, 19, 20.

high, understood our Lord in the sense for which we plead, and practised accordingly, is quite evident. For thus it is written; "Then they that gladly received his word were" what? admitted to the Lord's table? No; but "*baptized.* And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayer."*—Now, in regard to the members of this first Christian church, either our opponents conclude that they were all baptized, or they do not. If the latter, whence is their conclusion drawn? Not from the sacred historian's narrative. For thence we learn, that they whose hearts were penetrated by keen convictions, were *exhorted* to be baptized—that they who gladly received the truth were *actually* baptized—and that they who were baptized, and they only, for any thing that appears to the contrary, were added to the church. In what book, in what chapter, in what verse is any declaration found, relating to the church at Jerusalem, that can warrant a conclusion that unbaptized persons ate of the Lord's supper?

If all the members of this truly apostolic church were baptized; then, either the constitution of it, in that respect, is expressive of the mind of Christ, and is a model for succeeding churches, or it is not. If the former, either Jesus Christ discovered some defect in that plan of proceeding, and, in certain cases, countermanded his first order, or it must be wrong to admit persons to communion, who are not baptized. But if this apostolic precedent, is not expressive of the mind of Christ, and the pattern for imitation to the end of the world; the apostles, were either ignorant of our Lord's will, or unfaithful in the performance of it. Consequences these, which cannot be admitted, without greatly prejudicing the honor and interest of true religion, and not a little contributing to the cause of infidelity: for which reason they will, no doubt, be abhorred by all our brethren.

It is manifest from the first and most authentic his

* Acts ii. 41, 42.

tory of the primitive Christian church, contained in the Acts of the apostles; that after sinners had received the truth and believed in Jesus Christ, they were exhorted and commanded, by unerring teachers, to be baptized without delay. For thus we read; "Repent and *be baptized* every one of you"—"When they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were *baptized*, both men and women"—"And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he *baptized* him"—"And was *baptized*, he and all his straightway"—"Many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were *baptized*" "And now, why tarriest thou? *Arise and be baptized*"—"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we? And he *commanded* them to be *baptized* in the name of the Lord"—Acts ii. 38. viii. 12. 37. xvi. 33. xviii. 8. xxii. 16. x. 47.—Hence, it is abundantly evident, that baptism, in those days, was far from being esteemed an indifferent thing; and equally far from being deferred, till the Christian converts had enjoyed communion at the Lord's table for months and years. Submission to baptism was the first, the very first public act of obedience, to which both Jews and Gentiles were called, after they believed in Jesus Christ. The highest evidence of a person's acceptance with God, though attended with the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the bestowal of miraculous gifts, was so far, in the account of Peter, from superseding the necessity of a submission to the ordinance of baptism; that he urged the consideration of those very acts, as a reason why they who were so blessed and honored should submit to it *immediately*. Consequently, while we revere the authority by which the apostles acted, and while we believe that infant sprinkling is not baptism; we are obliged, in virtue of these ancient precedents, and by all that is amiable in a consistent

conduct, to admit none to communion at the Lord's table, whom we do not consider to be really baptized according to the command of Christ.

Nor have we the least reason to believe that the apostles were invested with a *discretional* power, to alter our Lord's institutions as they might think proper; either as to mode, or subject, or their order and connexion one with another. They never pretend to any such power; they utterly disclaim it. Let us hear the declaration of one, as the language of all, and that in regard to the sacred supper. "I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you." And again, relating to his doctrine in general, when writing to the same people, and in the same epistle, he says; "I delivered unto you that which I also received."—1 Cor. xi. 23. xv. 3.—The apostles being only *servants* in the house of God, had no more authority to alter or dispense with an ordinance of Jesus Christ, than any other minister of the word. Their apostolic gifts and powers did not at all invest them with a right of *legislation* in the kingdom of their divine Lord. They were still but *stewards;* as such they claimed regard from the churches, in which they labored and to which they wrote; at the same time freely acknowledging, that it was their indispensable duty to "be found faithful" in the whole extent of their office; they being accountable to the great Head of the church. They acted, therefore, in the whole compass of their duty, under the command, and by the direction of the ascended Jesus. Nay, the more they were honored and blessed by him, the more were they bound to obey the least intimation of his will.

Fourthly. If we regard *the different signification* of the two institutions, it will appear that baptism ought to precede. In submitting to baptism, we have an emblem of our union and communion with Jesus Christ, as our great representative, in his death, burial and resurrection; at the same time declaring, that we "reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God;" and that it is our desire, as well as our duty, to live devoted to him. And as, in baptism, we profess to have received spiritual life; so in com-

municating at the Lord's table, we have the emblems of that heavenly food by which we *live*, by which we *grow*, and in virtue of which we hope to *live for ever*. And as we are born of God but once, so we are baptized but once: but as our spiritual life is maintained by the continued agency of divine grace, and the comfort of it enjoyed by the habitual exercise of faith on the dying Redeemer, so it is our duty and privilege frequently to receive the holy supper. Hence theological writers have often called baptism, the sacrament of *regeneration*, or of *initiation:* and the Lord's supper, the sacrament of *nutrition*.

Whether, therefore, we consider the order of time, in which these two institutions were appointed; or the order of words, in the great commission given by our Lord to his ministering servants; or the order of administration in the *apostolic practice;* or the *different signification* of the two solemn appointments, a submission to baptism ought ever to precede a reception of the Lord's supper.

Should any one question the validity of this inference, I would ask; Whether, in regard to the sacred supper, he might not as well deny the necessity of always blessing the bread, before it be broken; or of breaking the bread, before it be received; or of receiving the bread, before the wine? Or, by what *better* arguments, he would prove the opposite conduct, either unlawful or improper? Nay, if these declarations, and facts, and precedents, be not sufficient to determine the point in our favor; it will be exceedingly hard, if not impossible, to conclude with certainty, in what order any two institutions that God ever appointed, were to be administered. For, surely, that order of proceeding which agrees with the time in which two institutions were appointed; with the words in which the observation of them was enjoined; with the *first administration* of them by unerring teachers; and with their *different signification*, must be the order of *truth*, the order of *propriety*, and the order of *duty*, because it is the order of God. We do well to remember, that when Paul commends the Corinthians for "keeping the ordinances *as they were*

delivered to them;" it is plainly and strongly implied, that divine ordinances are given us to keep; that they who keep them *as they were instituted*, are to be commended; and that they who do not keep them at all, or observe them in a *different order* or *manner* from that at first appointed, are worthy of censure.

It appears then, that the order in which the two positive institutions of Jesus Christ should be administered, is no less clearly expressed in the New Testament, than the mode and subject of baptism.

It would, no doubt, have been highly offensive to God, if the priests or the people of old had inverted the order appointed by him, for the administration of his own solemn appointments. For instance; First admit to the passover, afterwards circumcise; burn incense in the holy place, then offer the *propitiatory sacrifice*. Have we any reason, then, to imagine, that a similar breach of order is not equally displeasing to God, under the New Testament economy? If not, it must be supposed, that the Most High has not so great a regard to the purity of his worship, or is less jealous of his honor, and does not so much insist on his eternal prerogative now, as he did under the former dispensation: suppositions these, which they who acknowledge his universal dominion and absolute immutability, will hardly admit.

The argument on which mixed communion is urged, if suffered to operate in its full extent, would exclude both baptism and the Lord's supper from the worship of God. Baptism, it is said ought never to be made a term of communion in the house of God. It is affirmed that the grand, the only query, that is really necessary relating to a candidate for communion, is, Has God received him? Is he a believer in Jesus Christ?

If this grand rule of proceeding be right, we are bound to receive believers, *as such*, and have communion with them at the Lord's table, though they do not consider themselves as baptized. I would beg leave to ask; whether they would receive a candidate for communion, whom they esteem as a believer in Jesus Christ, who has not been baptized in infancy;

nor is willing to be baptized at all? The supposition of a person, in such circumstances, applying for fellowship at the Lord's table, is far from being improbable; nay, I have known it a real fact. What, then, would our brethren do in such a case?—If they receive a person, in the supposed case, they avowedly reject baptism, as unnecessary to fellowship in a church of Christ; for if it be not requisite in every instance, it is not so in any. If they refuse him, it must be because he is not baptized; for they consider him as a partaker of divine grace. If they reject him purely on that ground, Baptists ought to reject all who have had no other than infant baptism; because they consider it as a very different thing from the appointment of Christ. But, as before hinted, by the same rule that we receive *one* to communion, who is not baptized; who does not *consider* himself as baptized; who does not *pretend* to be baptized; we may receive *all:* for as there is but one Lawgiver, there is but one law, relating to this matter; and he who has a right to dispense with it *once*, may do so *as often* as he pleases. Consequently, the principle adopted by those who plead for free communion, has a natural tendency to exclude *baptism* from the worship of God.

I conclude, that though such a proceeding would be quite novel, absolutely unexampled in the churches of Christ, and would, probably, both astonish and offend sister communities, the church must receive him. But if it be lawful in one instance, it must be so in a thousand; and, therefore, a church on this principle, might thus go on, till the *Lord's supper* were entirely rejected by all her members, and banished from the worship of God, as it is among the Quakers.

The church of England has justly incurred the censure of all Protestant Dissenters, for her arrogant claim of 'power to *decree rites* or *ceremonies*,' in the worship of God, 'and of authority in controversies of faith;'* because such a claim infringes on the prerogative royal of Jesus Christ. But do not our brethren

* Articles of the Church of England, No. xx.

tacitly assume a similar power, when they presume to set aside an ordinance of Christ, or to reverse the order of divine institutions? it being demonstrable, that as great an authority is necessary to lay aside an old, established rite; or to invert the order and break the connexion of several rites; as can be required to institute one that is entirely new. 'For it is a maxim in law;' and holds good in divinity, 'That it requires the same strength to *dissolve* as to *create* an obligation.'*—If it be lawful to dispense with an appointment of God, out of regard to our weaker brethren, we cannot reasonably think it unlawful to practise the appointments of a National Church, out of regard to the *ruling powers;* submission to the latter, being no less plainly required in Scripture, than *condescension* to the former. And if we may safely connive at one human invention, so as to supersede and take place of a divine institution; why may not the church of England make what appointments she pleases? A little reflection will convince us, that he whose authority is competent to the setting aside or altering of one divine institution, has a power equal to his wishes—may ordain times, and forms, and rites of worship; may model the house of God according to his own pleasure. But can such an authority belong to any besides the Great Supreme? No; to such an ordaining, or dispensing power, neither church nor synod, neither parliament nor conclave, neither king nor pope, has the least claim. For as the exertion of Omnipotence was equally necessary to the creation of a worm, as an angel; of an atom, as a world; so the interposition of divine authority is no less necessary to set aside, or to alter, one branch of instituted worship, than to add a thousand religious rites, or essentially to alter the whole Christian system.

Nor are those writers who have appeared in vindication of the English Establishment, ignorant of their advantage over such Protestant Dissenters as proceed on the principles here opposed. For thus they argue: "If, notwithstanding the evidence produced, that

* Blackstone's Comment. on the Laws of England, Vol. I. Book I. ch. 2.

baptism by *immersion* is suitable, both to the institution of our Lord and his apostles; and was by them ordained to represent our burial with Christ, and so our dying unto sin, and our conformity to his resurrection by newness of life; as the apostle doth clearly maintain the meaning of that rite: I say, if notwithstanding this, all our (Pædobaptist) Dissenters do agree to sprinkle the baptized infant; why may they not as well submit to the significant ceremonies imposed by our church? For since it is as lawful to *add* unto Christ's institution a significant ceremony, as to *diminish* a significant ceremony which he or his apostles instituted, and use another in its stead, which they never did institute; what reason can they have to do the latter, and yet refuse submission to the former? And why should not the peace and union of the church be as prevailing with them to perform the one, as in their mercy to the infant's body to neglect the other?"*—I leave the intelligent reader to apply this reasoning to the case before us, and shall only observe; that if this learned writer had been addressing free communion Baptists, his argument would have had superior force. Because our Pædobaptist brethren believe that infant sprinkling is *real* baptism, and practise it as having the stamp of divine authority; whereas Baptists believe no such thing, and consider it as a mere human invention.

As the sovereign authority and universal dominion of God, over his rational creatures; as his absolute right, not only to worship, but also to be worshipped in his own way, are more strongly asserted and brightly displayed in his positive institutions, than in any other branches of his worship; so, it is manifest, that we cannot disobey his revealed will concerning them, without impeaching his wisdom and opposing his sovereignty. Because a special interposition of divine authority, and an express revelation of the divine will, constitute the basis, the only basis, on which such institutions rest, in regard to their mode and subject, their order and connexion one with another.

* Dr Whitby's Protestant Reconciler, p. 289.

For us then, to admit, as a divine institution, what we verily believe is a human invention, would be to act an unjustifiable part. For, on our principles, infinite wisdom chose and absolute sovereignty ordained *professing believers* as the subjects, and *immersion* as the mode of baptism.

Again: as the sovereign will of God is more concerned and manifested in positive ordinances than in any other branches of holy worship; so it is evident, from the history of the Jewish church, which is the history of Providence for near two thousand years, that the *divine jealousy* was never sooner inflamed, nor ever more awfully expressed, than when God's ancient people failed in their obedience to such commands, or deviated from the prescribed rule of such institutions. The destruction of Nadab and Abihu, by fire from heaven; the breach that was made upon Uzzah; the stigma fixed and the curses denounced on Jeroboam; together with the fall and ruin of all mankind, by our first father's disobedience to a positive command, are among the many authentic proofs of this assertion.—Nor need we wonder at the divine procedure, in severely punishing such offenders. For knowingly to disobey the positive laws of Jehovah, is to impeach his wisdom or his goodness, in such institutions; and impiously to deny his legislative authority and absolute dominion over his creatures And though the methods of Providence, under the gospel economy, are apparently much more mild and gentle, in regard to offenders in similar cases; yet our obligation to a conscientious and punctual obedience is not in the least relaxed. For that divine declaration, occasioned by the dreadful catastrophe of Aaron's disobedient sons, is an eternal truth, and binding on all generations; "*I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me.*"—Levit. x. 1, 2, 3.—When God speaks, we should be all attention; and when he commands, we should be all submission. The clearer light which God has afforded, and the richer grace which Christ has manifested, under the present dispensation; are so far from *lessening*, that they evidently *increase* our obligations to perform

every divine command relating to Christian worship. For, certainly, it must be allowed, that they on whom greater favors are bestowed and higher honors conferred, are so much the more obliged to revere, love, and obey their divine Benefactor. And, as a certain author justly observes, 'To take advantage of dark surmises, or doubtful reasoning, to elude obligations of any kind, is always looked upon as an indication of a dishonest heart.'* Most dangerous then, is the principle, and rebellious the conduct of those professors, who think themselves warranted, by the grace of the gospel, to trifle with God's positive appointments. Whether Jehovah lay his commands on Gabriel in glory, or on Adam in paradise; whether he enjoin the performance of any thing on Patriarchs, or Jews, or Christians, they are all and equally bound to obey, or else his commands must stand for nothing. Neither diversity of economy, nor difference of state, makes any alteration in this respect. We must be absolutely independent of God, before our obligations to obey him can be dissolved. But as the former is impossible, so is the latter.†

This reasoning is very strongly supported by the following quotation, taken from a little publication by Mr. John Ryland. 'The ordinances of the gospel are established by the authority of Christ, as king and supreme law-giver in his church; they are particularly enforced by his own example, and his will expressly declared: and as they have no dependence on any circumstances which are liable to vary in different countries or distant periods of time, it necessarily follows that the primitive model of administration *should be strictly and conscientiously adhered to.* No pretence to greater propriety, nor any plea of inconveniency, can justify our *boldly opposing the authority of God by the alteration of his law*, and substituting a human ordinance instead of a divine. In a former dispensation, in which the ritual was numerous and burdensome, the great Jehovah was particu-

* Dr. Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense, p. 21.

† Witsii Miscel. Sac. Tom. I. Lib. II. Disser. II.

larly jealous of his honor as Supreme Lawgiver, and looked upon the *least innovation as a direct opposition of his authority.* Moses, we are informed, was admonished of God to make all things according to the pattern showed him in the mount. And those unfortunate youths who presumed to alter the form of his religion, and worshipped him in a way he had not commanded, fell under the severest marks of his displeasure; which shows that he looked upon the least innovation in the *ceremonial part* of his precepts, as an *impious* and *daring opposition* and *contempt* of his authority, and as deserving of peculiar and distinguished vengeance, as a direct and open violation of the moral law. And as the great King of the universe required such exactness and punctuality, and insisted on such scrupulous exactness in the performance of the minutest rite belonging to the *legal* dispensation; it would be extremely difficult to assign a reason why he should be more *lax* and *careless*, and allow a *greater scope* to human discretion under the Christian economy. The greater light which shines in our religion, the small number and simplicity of its ceremonials, and the end and design of those institutions being more clearly revealed; are reasons which *strongly indicate the contrary.* And if it be further observed, that the religion of Jesus is particularly calculated to set aside worldly wisdom and mortify the pride of man; it cannot, without great absurdity, be supposed, that the sublime Author of it will dispense with the performance of his positive laws, or admit of the least variation, to honor that wisdom, or indulge that pride which the whole scope of his gospel hath a manifest tendency to abase. Surely then it behoves Christians, in an affair of such consequence, to be circumspect and wary; it will certainly be well for them, if they can give a good account of their practice, and a satisfactory answer to that important question, Who hath required this at your hand?'*

To dispense with the positive appointments of

* Six Views of Believers' Baptism, p. 17—20.

Jesus Christ, or to reverse the order of their administration, in condescension to weak believers, and with a view to the glory of God, cannot be right. For, as an eminent author observes, 'They must be evasions past understanding, that can hold water against a divine order—God never gave power to any man, to change his ordinances, or to dispense with them. God is a jealous God, and careful of his sovereignty. 'Tis not for any inferior person to alter the stamp and impression the prince commands. None can coin ordinances but Christ; and, till he call them in, they ought to be current among us.'* To which I may add the testimony of another learned writer, who says, when speaking of baptism; 'As the salvation of men ought to be dear unto us; so the glory of God, which consisteth in that his orders be kept, ought to be much more dear.'† What is *dispensing* with a positive appointment, but laying it aside, or conniving at a neglect of it, on such occasions in which it was commanded to be administered? Now, for us to admit unbaptized persons to the Lord's table, would be to lay entirely aside, and annul the ordinance. To dispense with a divine institution, for the edification of weak believers, and invert the order of God's appointments and break his positive laws, with a view to his glory, would seem to border on that hateful maxim, "Let us do evil that good may come." A position, which the pen of inspiration execrates; which every virtuous mind abhors. But that no pretence of doing honor to God, nor any plea of being useful to men, can possibly deserve the least regard, if the measures which must be pursued to obtain the end interfere with the divine revealed will, we learn from various facts recorded in the Bible. Uzzah, for instance, when he put forth his hand to support the tottering ark, thought, no doubt, he was doing honor to him who dwelt between the cherubims, over the mercy-seat; and, at the same time, as that sacred coffer was of the last importance in the ancient sanctuary, he showed an equal regard to the edification of

* Charnock's Works, Vol. II. p 763, 773, 774 Edit 1.

† Cartwright, in Wall's History of Infant Baptism. Part I. Chap. 15.

his fellow worshippers, by endeavoring to preserve it from injury. But, notwithstanding this fair pretext; nay, though the man after God's own heart saw little amiss in his conduct; (perhaps, thought he deserved praise as the ark, with all that pertained to it, and its whole management, were of *positive* appointment;) he, whose name is JEALOUS, was greatly offended. The sincere, the well-meaning man, having no command nor any example for what he did, fell under Jehovah's anger and lost his life, as the reward of his officiousness. And as the Holy Ghost has recorded the fact so circumstantially,* we have reason to consider it as a warning to all, of the danger there is in tampering with *positive* ordinances; and as a standing evidence, that God will have his cause supported and his appointments administered, *in his own way*.—The case of Saul, and the language of Samuel to that disobedient monarch, inculcate the same truth. "The people," said Saul to the venerable prophet, "took of the spoil, sheep and oxen—to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in *obeying* the voice of the Lord? Behold, *to obey* is better than sacrifice, and *to hearken* than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."† —Remarkable words! The king of Israel, we find, pleaded a regard to the worship and the honor of God. The cattle were spared, that Jehovah's altar might be furnished with plenty of the finest sacrifices. But Samuel soon overruled this fair pretence. He quickly informed the infatuated prince, that obedience to divine appointments, especially in such duties as depend entirely on an *express* command (as the utter destruction of Amalek did, and as communion at the Lord's table now does) is better in the sight of God, than hecatombs of bleeding sacrifices, or clouds of smoking incense: and, consequently, better than a misapplied tenderness to any of our fellow-creatures, or a misguided zeal to promote their peace and edification. At the same time the prophet assures him,

*2 Sam. vi. 1—11. †1 Sam. xv. 21, 22, 23.

that when the Most High commands, nothing can excuse a non-performance; because disobedience to a *plain, positive, known* command, is justly classed with idolatry and witchcraft.

A very sensible writer, in the conclusion of a discourse upon this passage, observes, that we may learn from this text, what are the true characteristics of acceptable obedience. 'It must be *implicit;* founded immediately on the authority of God. We must not take upon us to judge of the moment and importance of any part of his will, further than he hath made it known himself. It is a very dangerous thing for us to make comparisons between one duty and another; especially with a view of dispensing with any of them, or altering their order, and substituting one in another's place.'—Another 'character of true obedience is, that it be *self-denied* and *impartial;* that it be not directed or qualified by our present interest. —It is too common, that our own interest both points out the object, and assigns the measure of our obedience; and in that case, it does not deserve the name of obedience to God at all. When the Christian is devoted to God, ready at his call, and equally disposed to any employment assigned him in providence, he then may be said indeed to do his will.—It must 'be *universal*, without any exception. Saul, and the children of Israel, had complied so far with the order given them, that the greatest part both of the people and substance of Amalek was destroyed; but he stopped short, and knowingly left unfinished what had been enjoined him by the same authority.'*

When a Pædobaptist applies for communion with Baptists, he acts upon a persuasion that he has been rightly and truly baptized: for there is reason to believe, that the generality of our Pædobaptist brethren would start at the thought of partaking at the Lord's table, while they consider themselves as unbaptized. Consequently, when our opponents admit one of them to communion, they confirm him in what they consider as a false presumption, and practically approve of what, at other times, they boldly pronounce *a hu-*

* Dr. Witherspoon's Practical Discourses, Vol. I. p. 335, 336.

man invention, a tradition of men, and *will-worship;* for such infant sprinkling must be, if not a divine appointment. Nor can they exculpate themselves in this respect, unless they were *professedly* to receive him, as unbaptized. Because he *considers* himself as baptized, he *desires communion* as baptized; nor has he any idea of sitting down at the Lord's table, *as unbaptized;* well knowing, that such an attempt would be contrary to the apostolic pattern, and to the sense of the Christian church in general.

That circumcision was, by divine command, an indispensable qualification, in every male, for a participation of the Jewish passover, and communion in the sanctuary worship, is generally allowed. And though I am far from thinking that baptism came in the place of circumcision, as many of our Pædobaptist brethren suppose; yet that the former is equally necessary to communion at the Lord's table, under the Christian economy, as the latter was to every male in order to partake of the paschal feast, and to unite in the tabernacle service, I am fully persuaded. Nor is my opinion singular. It has been the sense of the Christian church in every age; and, excepting the few Baptists who plead for free communion, it is the voice of the Christian world in general at this day.—I do not find that the necessity of circumcision, for the purposes just mentioned, was ever controverted, either by the ancient or modern Jews. We will suppose, however, for the sake of argument, that it was disputed in the Jewish church; and that, amidst a great variety of interesting intelligence which the Rabbinical writers pretend to give, concerning ancient customs and ancient disputes, they are found to speak as follows: 'In the days of our master, Moses, disputes arose about the nature and necessity of circumcision: that is, whether the ancient rite was to be performed on the *foreskin,* or on a *finger;* and, whether it was an indispensably requisite qualification, in every male, for a seat at the paschal feast, and admission to the sanctuary worship. The generality of our fathers maintained that no male, though a son of Abraham, that no Gentile, though he might acknowledge and

serve Abraham's God, had any claim to communion in those joyful and solemn services, if he was not circumcised according to the divine command. Others contended with no less assurance, that circumcision being only an *outward sign* of what is internal and spiritual, every male, whether a descendant from the loins of our father Abraham, or one of the Gentile race who knew and feared the God of Israel, had an undeniable claim to fellowship, though it were not the foreskin of his flesh, but a finger that was circumcised. The latter asserted with great confidence, that the holy blessed God having accepted such, (as plainly appeared by their having the internal and spiritual circumcision) it would be *absurd* and *uncharitable* to refuse them communion. And when disputing with their opponents, they would with an air of superior confidence demand; Will *you* reject from fellowship those whom God has received?—Absolutely reject those who have *the thing signified*, barely because, in your opinion, they want the *external sign?*—Those who possess the *substance*, perhaps, to a much greater degree than yourselves, merely because they want the *shadow?* What, will you refuse communion to a brother Israelite, or a pious Gentile, in the tabernacle here below, with whom you hope to enjoy everlasting fellowship in the temple above? Strange attachment to the manner of performing an external rite! Besides, great allowances must be made for the prejudices of education. These brethren whom you reject as if they were heathens or were absolutely unclean, have been educated in the strongest prejudices against what we think the true circumcision. They have been taught from their earliest infancy, that though our fathers, for a few centuries after the rite was established, generally circumcised the foreskin; yet that the part on which the ceremony was first performed, is by no means *essential* to the ordinance. Various inconveniencies attend the mode of administration then generally practised; and our custom is not forbidden by any divine revelation. Besides, though it be admitted that the divinely appointed mode of administering the sacred rite is of *some*

importance; yet it must be admitted that the edification of such as truly fear God is of *infinitely greater importance.* But, if you exclude them from the solemn sanctuary worship, you debar them from a capital mean of their spiritual benefit. You should also consider, who is to be the judge of what is, or is not, the true circumcision. Every man, most certainly, must judge for himself, and not one for another; else you destroy the right of private judgment; you invade the sacred prerogative of conscience; and tacitly advance a claim to infallibility. If your brethren, who circumcise a finger instead of the part appointed, be satisfied in their *own minds*, they are circumcised *to themselves;* and while the answer of a good conscience attends it, God will and does own them in it, to all the ends designed by it; so that while they consider it as laying them under the same obligations to holiness of heart and life, as we consider our circumcision to do us, why should you not have fellowship with them?—Nor are you sufficiently aware, how *much you injure* the cause of real religion, and *promote* the baneful interests of infidelity, by being so strict and rigid. Were you to be more candid and charitable in regard to this matter, it might be expected that numbers of our brethren, who, it must be allowed, administer this rite in a very improper manner, would cordially unite with us, and in time utterly renounce their mistake. We should also have reason to hope that many of our Gentile neighbors, who *detest circumcision* as performed by us, might become proselytes to the Jewish religion, and worship the most high God in fellowship with us. But so long as you insist not only on the rite itself (for that we ourselves are not willing to give up entirely) but on that *mode* of administration which is so obnoxious to them, as indispensably necessary to communion with you; it will be, not only a *wall of partition* between us and them, but a *bone of contention* among the chosen tribes themselves. Consequently it must impede, greatly impede, the exercise of that love to God, and that affection for man, which are of much greater

importance than the most accurate performance of a merely external rite."

Now supposing our brethren in the course of their reading to meet with such an account, what would they think of it? What would they say? They would undoubtedly suspect the truth of the whole They would consider it as a Rabbinical fable!

Now according to the judgment of the Christian world in general, circumcision was not more necessary for all the males who desired communion at the paschal supper and in the solemn services of the tabernacle, than baptism is to fellowship in the Christian church, and a seat at the Lord's table—there is a wider and a more material difference between baptism as now administered to infants, and baptism as appointed by Jesus Christ, than there would have been between cutting off the foreskin and circumcising a finger: because the latter would have been *circumcision*, and the circumcision of a *proper subject* also, though not of the part required; but *sprinkling*, whether infants or adults, is no more *baptism*, than it is *immersion*. Had any members of the ancient synagogue introduced or admitted such an alteration as that supposed, they might have defended it on the same general grounds, and with much greater plausibility, in several respects at least, than a Baptist could defend the practice of free communion. For I appeal to my reader, whether the Pentateuch of Moses and the scriptures of the prophets do not say as much of circumcising the finger, as the evangelical history and the writings of the apostles do of baptizing infants.

Paul, when meeting with certain disciples at Ephesus, desired to know, whether they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed. To whom they answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." On which the apostle put the following question: "Unto what then were ye *baptized?*" And they said, "Unto John's baptism." From which it plainly appears, that as these persons professed to be disciples of Jesus Christ, Paul *took it for granted* they had been baptized. For his query is not, Have you been *baptized?* But, "Unto, or into,

what then were ye baptized ?" He inferred their baptism from their profession : and he had reason so to do. For he well knew, that the first administrator of the ordinance required a submission to it, of all that brought "forth fruits meet for repentance ;" that the apostolic ministry demanded the same act of obedience, from all that believed in Jesus Christ ; and the administration of baptism is a part of the ministerial office, being strictly connected with teaching the disciples of Christ, "to observe all things which he has commanded." And, as an author before quoted, justly remarks ; 'We find that the preachers of the gospel always did it, and the people who gladly received the word desired it. How indifferent soever it appears to some in our days, yet the grace of God *never failed* to stir up an early regard to it in times of old.'*

Once more : Either Jesus Christ has informed us in the New Testament what baptism is, and what is *requisite to communion* at his table, or he has not. If he has, we cannot admit any thing as baptism which we believe is not so, nor receive any to communion but those whom we consider as qualified according to his directions, without violating our allegiance to him as the King Messiah, and rebelling against his government. If he has not, there is no judge in Israel, and every one may do that which is right in his own eyes, in regard to these institutions. If our Lord instituted baptism, and left it undetermined *how* and to *whom* it should be administered ; if he appointed the sacred supper, without *characterizing* those who are to partake of it ; his ministering servants have a discretional power to administer them how and to whom they please. And if so, our brethren may sprinkle or immerse infants or adults, just as their own conveniency and the dispositions of their people require.

* Mr. Bradbury's Duty and Doctrine of Baptism, p. 70.—In a preceding page of the same Treatise, he says; 'I hear there are several who suppose that baptism is only the work of those that are grown up, and yet neglect it themselves. My brethren, whoever is in the right in *doctrine*, you are quite wrong in *practice*. Do not despise the advice of one who has more value for your happiness, than he has for his own opinion. I will give it you in the words of Ananias; "Why tarriest thou ? Arise and be baptized, washing away thy sins, and calling on the name of the Lord" See as above p. 16.

SECTION IV.

Several Passages of Scripture considered, which are produced in favor of mixed communion.

The cause which our brethren undertake to defend, is denominated by them, *Free Communion.* That communion, then, for which they plead, is *free.* But here I beg leave to ask, from *what?* The restraints of *men?* that is a laudable freedom. From the laws of *Heaven?* that were a licentious liberty. Absurd, in theory; impossible, in fact. It never was, it never can be the case, that God should institute a positive ordinance of divine worship, as the Lord's supper undoubtedly is, and leave it entirely to the discretion of men to whom it should be administered. Free—for *whom?* For every one that will? This none pretend. For all who imagine themselves believers? This no one asserts. For, they do not consider every one that thinks himself a believer and desires communion, as fit for it.

What, then, is the *freedom* for which they plead? Why, that Baptist churches should admit Pædobaptists into communion with them. In other words, that they should admit believers to the Lord's table, whom they consider as unbaptized. Such is *free communion:* in defence of which, several pamphlets have of late been published. Who can tell, but some brethren may so improve on the doctrine of liberty in regard to divine institutions of a positive nature, as to favor us, ere long, with a *Plea for free Baptism?*—With a dissertation intended to prove the lawfulness, and, in some cases, the necessity, of administering baptism to such whom we consider as unbelievers? especially, if the candidates for that ordinance be firmly persuaded in their own mind that they are believers in Jesus Christ.

But let us briefly consider the defence of this hypothesis. They argue, from *several passages* of scripture; from the *temper* required of real Christians, in

their behavior one towards another; and object against us our *own conduct* in another respect.

The principal passages adduced from holy writ, and here to be considered, are the following:—"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations—for God hath received him—Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God—God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith—I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."*

On which passages we may observe in general; whatever their meaning may be, except our opponents can make it appear that they contain the grant of a *dispensing power* to gospel ministers and churches; that is, unless these divine declarations authorize the ministers and churches of Christ to set aside an ordinance, or invert the order of its administration, as they may think proper; they are far from answering the exigences of the case, or serving the purpose for which they are cited.

Again: The texts produced do not so much as *mention* communion at the Lord's table, nor appear to have the least reference to it. No; the Holy Ghost has other objects in view, in each place. As these are the principal passages to which our brethren appeal, we may take it for granted, that better are not to be found; and, consequently, that positive proof is wanting. But if it be allowed, that there is no *positive* evidence in favor of admitting unbaptized persons to the supper, it amounts to a concession that there is *no proof* at all. Nothing of a positive and ritual nature can be proved a duty, or agreeable to the will of God, merely by our own reasonings, or by arguments formed on moral precepts and general rules of conduct. For if once we admit any thing in the worship of God, as a duty, that is grounded, either on far-fetched inferences from particular declarations of scripture, in which the holy penmen do not appear to have had the least thought of the matter in ques-

*Rom. xiv. 1. 3. and xv. 7. Acts. xv. 8, 9. 1 Cor ix. 19—23.

tion; or on our own ideas of expediency and usefulness, we shall not know where to stop. On this principle, a great number of ceremonies were brought into the church of Rome, and might be introduced by us, though not one of them could stand that divine query, "Who hath required this at your hand?" As it cannot be proved, by the deductions of reason, that it is the duty of any man to eat bread and to drink wine, as a branch of divine worship, but only from the testimony of God, so what he has revealed in regard to that matter is our only rule in all that relates to the Lord's supper. Consequently, as these passages say nothing at all about baptism, nor about communion at the Lord's table, either *strict*, or *free*; they have neither pertinency of application, nor force of argument. The New Testament knows no more of infant *baptism*, than it does of infant *communion:* and the arguments adduced in defence of the former, will equally apply to the latter.*

The converted Romans were commanded by Paul to "receive them that were weak in faith, as God and Christ had received them." And we are plainly informed, that the persons intended were such, as had not a clear discernment of their Christian liberty, in regard to the *eating of meats* forbidden by the ceremonial law, and *the observation of days*, that was of old required by it. What has this to do with *free communion?* Paul says, in this very epistle, "I commend unto you Phebe our sister,—that *ye receive her* in the Lord." Was her admission to the holy table the principal thing that he desired of the believing Romans? No; he evidently had something else in view; something that would manifest their love to a disciple of Christ, much more than barely permitting her to have communion with them in the sacred supper. For he immediately adds; "And that *ye assist*

* Dr. Priestley is also of the same opinion. For he says, 'No objection can be made to this custom, [i. e. of giving the Lord's supper to infants] but what may, with *equal force*, be made to the custom of baptizing infants And he informs us, that infant communion is to this day the practice of the Greek churches, of the Russians, the Armenians, the Maronites, the Copts, the Assyrians, and probably all other oriental churches' Address to Protestant Dissenters on giving the Lord's Supper to Children, p. 28, 31.

her in whatsoever business she hath need of you."* Or, did he solicit admission to the Lord's table, for himself and his fellow ministers, among the Corinthians, when he said; "*Receive us;* we have wronged no man; we have corrupted no man; we have defrauded no man?"† Or, for Epaphroditus, when he thus expressed himself to the Philippians; "*Receive him*, therefore, in the Lord, with all gladness, and hold such in reputation?"‡ Or, for Onesimus, when he said to Philemon; "*Receive him*, that is mine own bowels—*Receive him* as myself?"§ Was communion at the Lord's table the principal thing which the apostle John had in his eye, when he said; "We therefore ought to *receive such*, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth?"‖ It is, I will venture to affirm, a much greater thing to receive either a weak or a strong believer, in the sense of these exhortations, than merely to grant him a place at the Lord's table.

Besides, the faith of a sincere believer may be as weak, and require as much forbearance, in regard to the holy supper, as in respect of baptism. A reformed and really converted Catholic may desire fellowship with us, who still retains the Popish error of communion in one kind only: but are we obliged by this apostolic precept, to mutilate the sacred ordinance in condescension to his weakness?—To embrace the weak, as well as the strong believer, in the arms of Christian affection, is a capital duty of the moral law. To bear with a brother's infirmities, and to "forbear one another in love," are certainly required by that command, which says; "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself:" and would have been our duty, if neither baptism nor the Lord's supper had ever existed. But are we to regulate our conduct in the admission of persons to a *positive* institution;—to one which depends entirely on the *sovereign pleasure* of God, by inferences drawn from the *general* and *natural* duties of the moral law?—Were the precepts of that eternal law ever considered by the priests or the peo

* Rom. xvi. 1, 2. †2 Cor. vii. 2. ‡ Philip. ii. 29.
§ Philem. 12, 17. ‖ 3 John 8.

ple of old, as the rule of administering positive institutions? Had they not another system of precepts, *express precepts*, intended for that purpose? and was not such a ritual absolutely necessary?

Supposing, however, that there were no way of receiving one that is weak in faith, but by admitting him to the Lord's table, this text would be far from proving what our opponents desire; unless they could make it appear, that the "weak in faith" were *unbaptized;* or at least, so considered by their stronger brethren; for *that* is the point in dispute between us. But that Paul considered the believing Romans to whom he wrote, as baptized Christians, is allowed by all.

'But God receives the weak in faith; and we are expressly commanded to receive one another, not to doubtful disputations, but as Christ hath received us to the glory of God.' Granted: yet permit me to ask, Is the divine conduct, is the favor of God, or the kindness of Christ, in receiving sinners, the rule of our proceeding in the administration of positive institutions? Whom does God, whom does Christ receive? None but those that believe, and profess faith in the Lord Messiah? Our brethren will not affirm it. For if divine compassion did not extend to the dead in sin; if the kindness of Christ did not relieve the enemies of God; none of our fallen race would ever be saved. But does it hence follow, that we must admit the unbelieving and the unconverted, either to baptism, or the holy table? Our gracious Lord freely accepts all that desire it and all that come; but are we bound, by his example, to receive every one that solicits communion with us? Our opponents dare not assert it. For though the Great Supreme is entirely at liberty to do as he pleases, to reject or accept whom he will; yet it is not so with his ministering servants and professing people, in regard to the sacred supper. No; it is their indispensable duty and their everlasting honor, to regard his revealed will and obey his righteous commands. The divine *precepts* contained in the Bible, not the divine *conduct* in the administration of a sovereign Providence, are the only rule of our obedience in all things relating to positive institutions

Besides, gospel churches are sometimes obliged, by the laws of Christ, to exclude from their communion those whom he has received. Have churches never excluded any for scandalous backslidings, whom, notwithstanding, they could not but consider as received of Christ? Do they never exclude any but such of whom they have no hope? I cannot suppose, nor will they affirm any such thing. But if there may be a just cause of *excluding* such from communion whom God has received, why may there not be a sufficient reason of *refusing* communion to some, whom we look upon as the objects of God's peculiar favor? Is there not as great a degree of disapprobation discovered in the *former* case, as there is in the *latter?* and is not the word of God our only rule in both cases? It is not every one, therefore, that is received of Jesus Christ who is entitled to communion at his table; but such, and only such, as revere his authority, submit to his ordinances, and obey the laws of his house.

By the text from the Acts of the Apostles we learn, that "God is no respecter of persons;" that he, as an absolute sovereign, bestows his favors on Jews and Gentiles without any difference. But must we infer from hence, that they whose honor and happiness it is to be his obedient servants, are entirely at liberty to receive to communion at the Lord's table all that believe, without any difference? Can they justly conclude, that because Jehovah dispenses his blessings as *he* pleases, they may administer, or omit, his positive institutions as *they* please?

Once more: They produce, as much in their favor, the declarations of Paul to the church at Corinth, relating to his own conduct. "For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I

as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker thereof with *you*." 1 Cor. ix. 19—23. And what do we learn in general from this passage, but that he out of his great concern for the good of mankind, and his abundant zeal for the glory of God, was willing to do, or forbear, any thing that was lawful, in order to gain an impartial hearing from both Jews and Gentiles wherever he came? I said, any thing that *was lawful;* the rule of which is the divine precept, or some example warranted by divine authority. Nor can we view these words in a more extensive sense, without implicitly charging the great apostle with *temporizing*, and highly impeaching his exalted character.—But what has this text, any more than the former, to do with the administration, or laying aside, of positive institutions? It was the duty of Aaron, as well as of Paul, and of us, to seek the happiness of his fellow creatures and the honor of God, to the utmost of his ability. But was this general obligation the rule of his performing the solemn sanctuary services on the great day of atonement? Could he conclude from hence, that if the dispositions of the people required it, he was at liberty to *omit* any of the sacred rites, or to *transpose* the order in which Jehovah commanded they should be performed? If any can make it appear that this passage really has a relation to the positive appointments of Christ, it must be considered as the *Magna Charta* of a dispensing, priestly power, in regard to those institutions.

SECTION V.

The Temper required of Christians towards one another, not contrary to our Practice—Our Conduct freed from the Charge of Inconsistency—No Reason to exalt the Lord's Supper, in point of Importance, as superior to the Ordinance of Baptism.

Nothing is more common, with our opponents, when pleading for free communion, than to display

the excellence of Christian charity; and to urge the propriety, the utility, the necessity of bearing with one another's mistakes, in matters that are *non-essential;* in which number they class the ordinance of baptism. The epithets *not fundamental—non-essential*, frequently applied to *baptism*, might be applied, with equal propriety to the *Lord's supper?* But in what respect is a submission to baptism non-essential? To our justifying righteousness, our acceptance with God, or an interest in the divine favor? So is the Lord's supper; and so is every branch of our obedience. For they will readily allow, that an interest in the divine favor, is not *obtained* by the miserable sinner, but *granted* by the Eternal Sovereign. That a justifying righteousness is not the *result* of human endeavors, but the *work* of our heavenly Substitute, and a *gift* of boundless grace. And that acceptance with the high and holy God, is not on conditions performed *by us*, but in consideration of the *vicarious obedience* and *propitiatory sufferings* of the great Immanuel. Nay, since our first father's apostacy, there never was an ordinance appointed of God, there never was a command given to man, that was intended to answer any such end.

Baptism is *not fundamental;* is *not essential.* True; if limited to the foregoing cases. But are we hence to infer, that it is not necessary on *other accounts* and in *other views?* If so, we may alter, or lay it aside, just as we please; and, on the same principle, we may dismiss, as *non-essential*, all order and every ordinance in the church of God.

Is not the institution of baptism a branch of divine worship? And is not the administration of it, prior to the Lord's supper, essential to that order in which Christ commanded his positive appointments to be regarded? "Let all things be done decently and in order." As the Divine Spirit requires the observation of order in the church of God, so Paul commends the Corinthians for "keeping the ordinances *as he delivered them;*" and expresses a holy joy on "beholding the order" of that Christian church which was at Colosse. But that order which the great Lord of all appointed, and in the practice of which the good

apostle sincerely rejoiced, our brethren, would consider as *a mere trifle*—as comparatively *nothing*. But give me leave here to inquire, Whether the primitive order of gospel churches can be detached from the legislative authority of Jesus Christ? And, whether the exercise of that authority can be considered as having no connexion with his honor? A breach of that order which Christ appointed, as king in Zion, must be considered as an opposition to his crown and dignity. Jesus our Lawgiver is Jehovah; between whose *honor* and the *happiness* of sinful worms, there is, there can be no comparison. The latter is only *a means*, whereas the former is the *grand end*, not only of a church state, but of the whole economy of providence and grace. I may, therefore, venture to retort the argument; though it be admitted, that the edification of Christians is of *great* importance; yet it must be allowed, that the honor of our divine Sovereign is of *infinitely greater* importance; and, consequently, the primitive order of the gospel churches should be observed.

My readers must be a little surprised at such reasoning as I have just produced Are they not ready to say, What, reverse the order of churches, appointed by God himself, with a view to edification! Dispense with a positive ordinance of heaven, and break a divine command, under the pretence of promoting obedience to Christ! If we are obliged, in some cases, to set aside an ordinance of divine worship, and to break a *positive* command, in order that certain individuals may perform *another positive* injunction of the great Legislator; the laws of Christ are not half so consistent as Paul's preaching; "which was not yea and nay." Nor have we, any thing like a parallel case, either in the Old or New Testament. We find, indeed, an instance of a typical rite giving way to natural necessities, as when David ate of the shew-bread, without incurring a divine censure: but we have no example of a positive ordinance being set aside, in favor of any one's *ignorance* or *prejudice* against it, or that he might be edified by submitting to *another positive* institution, of which he desired to partake.

The neglect of circumcision by the Israelites in the wilderness, while they attended on other positive appointments of God, is argued strongly for free communion; but let it not be forgotten that that omission is keenly censured by the Holy Ghost. The uncircumcised state of the people, whatever might be the occasion of it, is called *a reproach*, "the reproach of Egypt;" which odium was rolled from them on the borders of Canaan, and the place in which they were circumcised was called by a new name, to perpetuate the memory of that event.* Now, as that neglect of the Israelites was a *breach* of the divine command, a *reproach* to their character as the sons of Abraham, and stands *condemned* by the Spirit of God; it cannot authorize in us a similar omission, much less require it at our hands. Nor is that other instance, which is sometimes produced, relating to the feast of passover, in the reign of Hezekiah, any more to the purpose. For though many of the people were not "cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary;" though "they did eat the passover otherwise than it was written," yet Hezekiah was so conscious of those irregularities, that he deprecated the divine anger, saying, "The good Lord *pardon* every one that prepareth his heart to seek the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and *healed* the people."† With what shadow of reason, then, or of reverence for God's commands, can any one plead this instance in favor of free communion? Shall a *deviation* from a divine rule, a deviation that is acknowledged as *criminal* before the Lord, and for which *pardon* is requested, be adduced, as a precedent for the conduct of Christians! What would our brethren have thought of Hezekiah and his people, had they taken the liberty of repeating the disorderly conduct, whenever they celebrated the paschal anniversary?—taken the liberty of transgressing the divine rule, because Jehovah had *once* graciously pardoned their irregularities, and accepted their services, on a similar occasion? Would they

* Joshua v. 9. † 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19, 20.

not have been chargeable with bold presumption, and with doing evil that good might come?—I heartily accord with the following declarations of a learned pen: 'We must serve God, not as we think fit, but as he hath appointed. God must be judge of his own honor.—Nothing, then, is small, whereupon depends the sanctity of God's commandment and our obedience.'* There is, however, little need of the maxims or the declarations of men, while we have the decision of *Him* who purchased the church with his own blood; of *Him* who is to be our final judge. Now the language of that Being is; "In *all things* that I have said unto you, *be circumspect*—Teaching them *to observe all things* whatsoever I have commanded you." And it is worthy of remark, that it stands recorded to the honor of Moses, seven or eight times in one chapter, that "he did as the Lord commanded him."—Exod. xl.

The question is not, whatever our opponents may think, Whether baptism is essential to *our salvation?* But, Whether God has not *commanded* it? Whether it is not a believer's *duty* to be found in it? And, Whether the pastor and members of a Baptist church could justify themselves, in admitting persons to communion that have *never been baptized?* On the principle assumed by those who charge us with bigotry in this thing, a professor that has no inclination to obey a divine command, may vindicate his refusal, by saying; 'The performance of it is not essential to my happiness; for a sinner may be saved without it.' A mode of arguing this, big with rebellion against the dominion of God: a principle, which, pursued in its consequences, is pregnant with ruin to immortal souls. What, shall we do nothing that God has commanded, unless we look upon it as essentially necessary to our future felicity? Is this the way to manifest our faith in Jesus and love to God?—How much better is the reasoning of Mr. Charnock, when he says: "*Deus voluit*, is a sufficient motive; and we cannot free ourselves from the censure of disobedience, if we observe not his commands in the *same manner* that he enjoins them; in their *circumstances*, as well as their sub-

* Pemble's Introduction to Worthy Receiving the Lord's Supper, p. 21, 31.

stance.—Who can, upon a better account, challenge an exemption from positive institutions than our Saviour, who had no need of them: yet how observant was he of them, because they were established by divine authority! So that he calls his submitting to be baptized of John, a *fulfilling of righteousness*—Is it not a great ingratitude to God, to despise what he commands as a privilege? Were not the apostles men of an extraordinary measure of the Spirit, because of their extraordinary employments? And did they not exercise themselves in the institutions of Christ? How have many [meaning the Quakers] proceeded from the slighting of Christ's institutions, to the denying the authority of his word! A slighting Christ himself, crucified at Jerusalem, to set up an imaginary Christ within them!'*

'But must we not exercise Christian charity, and bear with one another's infirmities? Should we not seek peace, and endeavor to promote harmony among the people of God?' Undoubtedly: yet is there no way for us to exercise love and forbearance without practising free communion? Can we not promote peace and harmony without practically approving of infant sprinkling as if it were a divine ordinance, while we are firmly persuaded that God never appointed it? Or, are we bound to admit as a fact, what we verily believe is a falsehood? The distinction between a Christian who holds what I consider as a practical error in the worship of God, and the mistake maintained, is wide and obvious. It is not an erroneous principle, or an irregular practice, that is the object of genuine charity. No; it is the *person* who maintains an error, not the *mistake* defended, that calls for my candor. The *former*, I am bound, by the highest authority, to love as myself; the *latter*, I should ever consider as inimical to the honor of God, as unfriendly to my neighbor's happiness, and therefore discourage it, in the exercise of a Christian temper, through the whole of my conduct.—I freely allow that a mistake which relates merely to the mode and subject of baptism, is comparatively small; but still, while

*Works, Vol. II. p. 766, 773, 775.

I consider the aspersion of infants as a human invention in the solemn service of God, I am bound to enter my protest against it; and by a uniform practice to shew, that I am a *Baptist*—the same when a Pædobaptist brother desires communion with me, as when one of my own persuasion makes a similar request. Thus proving that I act, not under the impulse of passion, but on a dictate of judgment: and then. the most violent Pædobaptist opponents will have no shadow of reason to impeach my integrity;—no pretence for surmising, that when I give the right hand of fellowship to such as have been immersed on a profession of faith, I act on *principles of conscience;* but that when admitting such to communion who have been only sprinkled, I act on *motives of convenience.* Though some of our Pædobaptist brethren would urge us to open communion as being *candid* and *catholic*, some even of themselves view the subject very differently.—A Pædobaptist, when remonstrating against the conduct of some Independent churches, that received Baptists into communion with them, says; 'Let men pretend what they can for such a *hotch-potch* communion in their churches, I steadfastly believe the event and issue of such practices will, sooner or later, convince all gainsayers, that it neither pleaseth Christ, nor is any way promotive of true peace or gospel holiness in the churches of God's people.—I shall never be reconciled to that *charity*, which, in pretence of *peace and moderation*, opens the church's door to church-disjointing principles.' And he entitles his performance, "The sin and danger of admitting Anabaptists to continue in the Congregational churches, and *the inconsistency of such a practice with the principles of both.*"*

Here one can hardly avoid observing the very peculiar treatment which the Baptists in general meet from their Pædobaptist brethren. Do we strictly abide by our own principles, admitting none to communion with us, but those whom we consider as *baptized* believers? We are censured by many of them

* In Crosby's Hist. Bap. Vol. III. page 45, 46, 47.

as uncharitably rigid, and are called by one gentleman, *watery bigots.* Do any of our denomination, under a plea of catholicism, depart from their avowed sentiments, and connive at *infant sprinkling?*—They are suspected, by others of the Pædobaptists, as a set of *temporizers.* So that like those unhappy persons who fell into the hands of Procrustes, some of us are too short, and we must be *stretched;* others are too long, and they must be *lopped.*—But I return to my argument.

It should be observed, that forbearance and love, not less than resolution and zeal, must be directed in the whole extent of their exercise, by the word of God; else we may greatly offend, and become partakers of other men's sins, by conniving when we ought to reprove. If the divine precepts, relating to love and forbearance, will apply to the case in hand; or so as to justify our connivance at an alteration, a corruption, or an omission of baptism; they will do the same in regard to the Lord's supper.—And then we are bound to bear with sincere Papists, in their mutilation of the *latter;* and to exculpate our upright friends the Quakers, in their opposition to *both.* For it cannot be proved that baptism is less fundamental than the sacred supper.—'There is a *false, ungodly* charity,' says a sensible Pædobaptist writer, 'a strange fire, that proceeds not from the Lord; a charity that gives up the honor of religion, merely because we will not be at the pains to defend it—Vile principles can easily cover themselves with the names of temper, charity, moderation, and forbearance; but those glorious things are not to be confounded with lukewarmness, self-seeking, laziness, or ignorance—As there is a cloak of covetousness, so there is a cloak of fear and cowardice—You are never to make peace with men at the expense of any truth, that is revealed to you by the great God; because that is offering up his glory in sacrifice to your own—Do not dismember the Christian religion, but take it all together: charity was never designed to be the tool of unbelief. See how the Spirit has connected both our principles and

duties. Follow *peace* with all men, and *holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord.'*—'I know not that man in England,' says Dr. Owen, 'who is willing to go farther in forbearance, love, and communion with all that fear God, and hold the foundation, than I am: but this is *never to be done* by a condescension from the exactness of the least *apex* of gospel truth.'†

Another Pædobaptist author, when treating on charity and forbearance, expresses himself in the following language: 'A considerable succedaneum for the Christian unity, is the *catholic charity;* which is like the charity commended by Paul in only this one circumstance, that it "groweth exceedingly"—Among the stricter sort, it goes chiefly under the name of *forbearance.* We shall be much mistaken if we think that by this soft and agreeable word, is chiefly meant the tenderness and compassion inculcated by the precepts of Jesus Christ and his apostles. It strictly means, an agreement to differ quietly about the doctrines and commandments of the gospel, without interruption of visible fellowship. They distinguish carefully between *fundamentals*, or things necessary to be believed and practised; and *circumstantials*, or things that are indifferent. Now whatever foundation there may be for such a distinction in *human* systems of religion; it certainly looks very ill-becoming in the churches of Christ, to *question how far he is to be believed and obeyed.*‡ That illegitimate charity and false moderation, which incline professors to treat divine institutions as articles of small importance, led Melancthon, to place the doctrine *of justification* by faith alone, the *number* of positive institutions in the Christian church, the *jurisdiction* claimed by the Pope, and several *superstitious rites* of the Romish religion, among things *indifferent*, when an imperial edict required compliance.§ But, 'as we must take heed that we do not add the fancies of men to our divine religion, so we should take equal care that we

* Mr. Bradbury's Duty and Doct. of Bap. p. 201, 213, 214

† In Mr. Bradbury, as before, p. 198. ‡ Strictures on Modern Simony.

§ Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. Vol. IV. p. 37, 38.

do not *curtail* the appointments of Christ,'* out of any pretence to candor.

Once more: Remarkably strong, are the words of Mr. John Wesley, which are quoted with approbation by Mr. Rowland Hill. 'A catholic spirit is not speculative latitudinarianism. It is not an indifference to all opinions. This is the spawn of hell; not the offspring of heaven. This unsettledness of thought, this being driven to and fro, and tossed about with every wind of doctrine, is a great curse, not a blessing; an irreconcilable enemy, not a true catholicism.—A man of a true catholic spirit does not halt between two opinions, nor vainly endeavors to blend them into one. Observe this, you that know not what spirit you are of; who call yourselves of a catholic spirit, only because you are of a muddy understanding; because your mind is all in a mist; because you are of no settled, consistent principles, but are for jumbling all opinions together.†

Our brethren with an air of superior confidence often demand, 'What have we to do with *another's baptism?*' This interrogatory I would answer by proposing another: What have I to do with another's *faith*, *experience*, or *practice?* In one view, nothing at all, if he do not injure my person, character, or property; for to his own master he stands or falls. In another, much; that is, if he desire communion with me at the Lord's table. After believing, baptism is the *first*, the *very first* that requires a public act of obedience. But he says 'I have been baptized.' Perhaps not. Make it appear, however, and I shall say no more on that subject.—'I am really persuaded of it in my own mind. Were it otherwise, I should not hesitate a moment to be immersed on a profession of faith. I am persuaded Christ has accepted me, and that it is my duty to receive the holy supper.' That Christ has received you, I have a pleasing persuasion; and so I conclude, in a judgment of charity, concerning all whom I baptize: but that it is the *immediate* duty of any unbaptized believer to approach

* Dr. Watt's Humble Attempt, p. 62.

† In Mr. Rowland Hill's Full Answer to Mr. J. Wesley's Remarks, p. 40, 41.

the Lord's table, I cannot perceive; the general practice of the Christian church in every age, has been in the negative. A learned writer assures us, that 'among *all the absurdities* that ever were held, none ever maintained *that*, that any person should partake of the communion before he was baptized.' Christ commands believers to remember him at his own table. But were those believers to whom he first gave the command *unbaptized?* Or, can we infer, because it is the duty of all baptized believers to celebrate the Lord's supper, that it is the *immediate* duty of one that is not baptized, so to do?—Suppose a Jew, a Turk, or a Pagan, to be enlightened by divine grace, to have the truth as it is in Jesus, to love God and desire communion with his people before he is baptized; would you think it right, could your own conscience admit of it, as consistent with the revealed will of Christ and the practice of his apostles, that such a request should be granted by any gospel church? In a case of this kind, I presume,—and there have been millions of Jews and Heathens converted, since the Christian era commenced,—in such a case you would easily discern a consistency between loving him as a believer, and refusing to have communion with him till he was baptized. Nay, I cannot help thinking, but you would be startled at the report of any religious community admitting such an one to the Lord's table; because it would strike you as a notorious departure from the divine rule of proceeding, from the laws and statutes of Heaven in that case made and provided. Besides, you have already acknowledged, that if you did not consider yourself as baptized, if you thought immersion on a profession of faith essential to baptism, which you very well know is *my* sentiment, you should think it your duty to submit, you would not hesitate a moment. So that, were I to encourage your immediate approach to the sacred supper, I should stand condemned on your own principles.

This, then, is the only question between us, *what is baptism?* For you dare not assert, you cannot sup-

pose, that an unbaptized believer, descended from Christian parents, has any pre-eminence, in point of claim to communion, above a truly converted Jew: and you must allow that I have an equal right with you, or any other man, to judge for myself what is essential to baptism. You verily believe that you have been baptized; I am equally confident, from your own account of the matter, that you have not. Your conscience opposes the thought of being immersed on a profession of faith, because, in your opinion, it would be rebaptization; mine cannot encourage your approach to the Lord's table, because I consider infant baptism as invalid.—Now I appeal to the reader, I appeal to our brethren themselves, whether, on our Antipædobaptist principles, we are not obliged to consider a truly converted but unbaptized Mussulman, and a converted Englishman, who has had no other than pædobaptism, as on a level in point of communion with us? For God is no respecter of persons It is no matter where a man was born, or how he was educated; whether he drew his first breath at Constantinople, or Pekin, or London; whether his parents taught him to revere the Koran of Mahomet, the Institutes of Confucius, or the Revelation of God; if he really be born of the Spirit he has an equal claim to all the privileges of a gospel church, with a true convert descended from Christian ancestors. And if so, while our brethren abide by their present hypothesis, they could not refuse the sacred supper to the one, any more than the other, without the most palpable inconsistency; though, by admitting the *former* to that divine appointment, they would surprise and offend all that heard of it.

But, notwithstanding all I have said, we stand charged by our brethren with a *notorious inconsistency* in our own conduct; because we admit Pædobaptist ministers into our pulpits, to whom we should refuse communion at the Lord's table.

The first thing, that demands regard, is the state of the question which is now before us. The point in dispute is, whether baptism be equally necessary to

the *occasional exercise* of ministerial gifts, as it is to *communion* at the Lord's table? and, whether the scripture favor the one as much as the other?

Such being the state of the question, I beg leave to ask; Supposing our brethren to prove the affirmative beyond a doubt, what is the consequence, and how are we affected by it? Is it, that we are found guilty of a direct violation of some divine command, that *requires* us to receive Pædobaptists into our communion? This is not pretended. Is it, that we oppose some plain apostolic *precedent?* neither is this laid to our charge. What, then, is the conclusion they would infer? It must, surely, be something formidable to every Baptist; otherwise it is hardly supposable that so much weight should be laid upon this objection. The consequence, however, is only this; *The Baptists, are not infallible and do actually err.* So soon as our brethren shall make it appear, that they have as good a warrant for receiving Pædobaptist believers into stated communion, as I have to admit a Pædobaptist minister occasionally into my pulpit, I will either *encourage* the former, or *entirely refuse* the latter.

But is there *no* difference between occasionally admitting Pædobaptist ministers into our pulpits, and receiving them or others of the same persuasion, into our communion? Public preaching is not confined to persons related in a *church state*, nor ever was; but the Lord's supper is a church ordinance, nor ought ever to be administered but to a particular church, *as such.* Now it is of a particular church, and of a positive ordinance peculiar to it, concerning which is all our dispute.—There is not that strict mutual relation between hearers of the word and the preacher, as there is between the members of a church and her pastor, or between the members themselves. And as, according to the appointment of God, persons must *believe* the gospel before they have any thing to do with positive institutions; so, in the ordinary course of Providence, they must *hear* the gospel in order to their believing. The Corinthians *heard* before they *believed*; they believed before they were *baptized;* and, no doubt, they were baptized before they received the

sacred supper. (Acts xviii. 8.) Were we to receive Pædobaptists into our fellowship, we should practically allow what we consider a human invention, to supersede a divine institution; not so, when we admit ministers of that persuasion into our pulpits. In this case there is no divine institution superseded; no human invention, in the worship of God, encouraged. —Again: when we admit Pædobaptist ministers into our pulpits, it is in expectation that they will preach the gospel; that very gospel which we believe and love, and about which there is no difference between them and us. But to receive Pædobaptists into communion, would be openly to connive at an error; an error both in judgment and practice; an error of that kind which the scripture calls, "will-worship, and the traditions of men." There is, undoubtedly, a material difference, between hearing a minister who, in our judgment, is ignorant of the only true baptism, discourse on those doctrines he experimentally knows, and countenancing an invention of men. In the former case we shew an esteem for his personal talents, we honor his ministerial gifts, and manifest our love to the truth; in the latter, we set aside a divinely appointed prerequisite for communion at the Lord's table.

It has been a fact, that persons have been called by grace, who were not baptized in their infancy; and who, considering baptism as a temporary institution, have conscientiously refused a submission to that ordinance and yet desired communion in the holy supper. Now suppose a community of such; and that they call to the ministry one of their number, who is allowed by all competent judges, to possess great ministerial gifts, and to be a very useful preacher:— or suppose a reformed Catholic, equally the subject of divine grace, and endued with equal abilities for public service, yet conscientiously retaining the Popish error of communion in one kind only. Now, on either of these suppositions, I demand of our Pædobaptist brethren, whether they would receive such an one into communion with the same readiness that they would admit him into their pulpits? If they an-

swer in the negative, then we may retort upon them, shall an excellent, laborious and useful minister of Christ *work* for you, and shall he not be allowed to *eat* with you! What, shall he break the bread of life *to* you, and must he not be suffered to break bread at the Lord's table *with* you!

Though, as Baptists, it cannot be expected, that we should produce instances out of the New Testament, of Pædobaptist ministers being encouraged in a similar way; because we are firmly persuaded there were none such till after the sacred canon was completed: yet we find in that inspired volume, a sufficient warrant for uniting with those that believe, in affection and walk, so far as agreed; notwithstanding their ignorance of some part of the counsel of God, to which a conscientious obedience is indispensably required from all those by whom it is known. (Philip iii. 15, 16.) Yes, the New Testament not only *permits* as lawful, but *enjoins* as an indispensable duty, that we should love them that love the Lord; and that we should manifest this holy affection in every way, that is not inconsistent with a revelation of the divine will in some other respect. So it was under the Jewish economy, and so it is now. To admit, therefore, a minister to preach among us, with whom we should have no objection to commune, could we allow the validity of infant baptism; as it is a token of our affection for a servant of Christ, of our love to the truth he preaches, and is not contrary to any part of divine revelation, must be lawful: or if not, it lies with our brethren to prove it; because they cannot deny that the word of God requires us to love him, and to manifest our affection for him. When we ask a Pædobaptist minister to preach in any of our churches, we act on the same general principle, as when we request him to pray with any of us in a private family. And as no one considers *this* as an act of church communion, but as a testimony of our affection for him, so we consider *that;* and it is viewed by the public as a branch of the general intercourse, which it is not only lawful, but commendable and profitable to have with all that preach the gospel.

I take it for granted, that circumcision was absolutely necessary for every male, in order to communion at the paschal supper, and in the solemn worship of the sanctuary. And if so, had the most renowned antediluvians that ever lived, or the most illustrious Gentiles that ever appeared in the world, been cotemporary with Moses and sojourners in the same wilderness, they could not have been admitted to communion in the Israelitish church, without submitting to circumcision. Enoch, though as a saint he walked with God; though as a prophet he foretold the coming of Christ to judgment—Noah, though an heir of the righteousness of faith, a preacher of that righteousness, and one of Ezekiel's worthies, (Chap. xiv. 14, 16, 18, 20.)—Melchisedek, though a king, and a priest of the most high God; superior to Abraham, and the greatest personal type of the Lord Messiah that ever was among men—and Job, though for piety there was none like him upon earth—these I say, notwithstanding all their piety and holiness, notwithstanding all their shining excellences, exalted characters, and useful services, could not have been admitted to communion with the chosen tribes at the tabernacle of the God of Israel, without a violation of the divine command. This, I persuade myself, our opponents must allow: this, I think, they dare not deny. Yet if Enoch, had been in the camp of Israel when Korah and his company mutinied, and had been disposed to give the rebels a lecture on the second coming of Christ, I cannot suppose that his offered service would have been rejected by Moses or Joshua, merely because he was not circumcised. Or, if Noah had been present at the erection of the tabernacle, and inclined to give the people a sermon on the future incarnation of the Son of God, and the righteousness of faith, to which objects that structure, with its costly utensils and solemn services, had a typical regard, I cannot but think they would have given him a hearing. Nay, I appeal to our opponents themselves, whether they do not think so as well as I. Yet that favored people *could not* have admitted them to communion in some other branches of divine worship,

without transgressing the laws of Jehovah. (Exod. xii. 44, 48. Ezek. xliv. 7.) If this be allowed, the consequence is plain, and the argument, though analogical, is irrefragable. For the paschal feast and the sanctuary services were not more of a positive nature than the Lord's supper; nor were the former more peculiar to that dispensation than the latter is to this; but preaching and hearing the word are not peculiar to any dispensation of grace, as are baptism and the sacred supper.

Our Lord, though he warned his hearers against the pride and hypocrisy, the unbelief and covetousness, of the ancient Pharisees, and Scribes, and Jewish teachers; yet exhorted the people to regard the truths they delivered. (Matt. xxiii. 1, 2, 3.) When the beloved disciple said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us:" Jesus answered, "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us, is for us." (Luke ix. 49, 50.) From which it appears, that we are under obligation to encourage those that fight against the common enemy, and propagate the common truth; though they and we may have no communion together, in the ordinances of God's house.

Once more: A very competent judge of all that pertains to the ministerial character, and of all that belongs to a Christian profession, has left his opinion on record concerning the ministry of certain persons, whom he considered as quite unworthy of his intimate friendship. Even Paul, when acting as amanuensis to the Spirit of wisdom, speaking of some who preached the gospel, informs us, that *envy* and *strife* were the principles on which they acted, and the *increase of his afflictions* the end which they had in view. How carnal and base the principles! How detestable the end at which they aimed!—But was the apostle offended or grieved, so as to wish they were silenced? Or, did he charge his beloved Philippians, and all the sincere followers of Christ, never to hear them? Let his own declaration answer the queries. "What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pre-

tence, or in truth, *Christ is preached;* and therein I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." (Philip. i. 15—18.) When a corrupted gospel is preached, he asserts his apostolic authority, and thunders out anathemas against the propagators of it. (Gal. i. 6—9.) Because, as God will not set the seal of his blessing to a falsehood, or sanctify a lie, it can do no good; it is pregnant with mischief. But when the pure gospel is preached, though from perverse motives, it is *the truth*, and God frequently owns and renders it useful. Hence the apostle's joy in the text before us.—Now, as we are far from impeaching the sincerity of our Pædobaptist brethren, when preaching the gospel of our ascended Lord; and as Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, though by persons who acted on the basest principles; we cannot imagine that he would have taken less pleasure in the thought of Pædobaptist ministers publishing the glorious gospel of the blessed God, had there been any such in those days, even though he might have considered them as under a great mistake, in regard to baptism: And if so, we may safely conclude, that there is nothing inconsistent with our hypothesis, in occasionally admitting Pædobaptist ministers into our pulpits, and hearing them with pleasure.—But will our opponents assert, or can they suppose, that the great apostle of the Gentiles would have encouraged with equal delight such persons as those of whom he speaks, to approach the holy table and have communion with him in all the ordinances of God's house? Persons, who made the glorious gospel of the blessed God the vehicle of their own pride, and envy, and malice; and in whose conduct those infernal tempers reigned, and had for their immediate object one of the most excellent and useful men that ever lived? Certainly, if on any occasion, we may here adopt the old proverb; *Credat Judæus appella.*

It is with peculiar pleasure, on this occasion, that I introduce the following pertinent passage from a little publication written by Mr. John Ryland. His words are these: 'Dr. Daniel Waterland justly observes, that the true doctrine of the Trinity and the

atonement of Christ, have been kept up in the Christian church, by the institutions of baptism and the Lord's supper, more than by any other means whatsoever; and, humanly speaking, these glorious truths, which are essential to salvation, would have been lost long ago, if the two positive institutions had been totally neglected and disused amongst professors of Christianity. In this point of view, baptism and the Lord's supper appear to be of *unspeakable importance to the glory of God, and the* very being *of the true church of Christ on earth.*"*—Again: In another little piece, to which I have already referred, and of which the same worthy minister of Jesus Christ has expressed his approbation in more ways than one, though it does not bear his name, I find the following strong assertions relating to the importance and utility of baptism: "It is highly incumbent on *all* that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and are glad to behold their Saviour in every view in which he is pleased to reveal himself, to consider the *dignity* and *glory* of his holy institutions. These last legacies of a dying Saviour, these pledges of his eternal and immutable love, ought to be received with the *greatest reverence* and the *warmest gratitude.* And as they directly relate to the death of the great Redeemer, which is an event the most interesting, an action the most grand and noble that ever appeared in the world, they ought to be held in the *highest esteem*, and performed with the *utmost solemnity.* Of these institutions, *baptism* calls for our *first* regard, *as it is appointed to be first performed: and however lightly the inconsiderate part of mankind may affect to treat this ordinance, it ought to be remembered, that Christ himself considered it and submitted to it, as an important part of that righteousness which it became even the Son of God to fulfil.* As this ordinance is to be *once* performed, and not repeated, every Christian ought to be *particularly careful* that it is done in a right manner; or the benefit arising to the soul from this institution is *lost*, and lost *forever.* We ought with the utmost deliberation and care to consider—its own *native dignity*, as an

* Beauty of Social Religion, p. 10.

action of the positive or ritual kind, the *most great and noble in itself, and well pleasing to God, that it is possible for us to perform on this side heaven.*—In this action, Christians, you behold the counsel of God; it is the result of his wise and eternal purpose; it is clearly commanded in his word; it is enforced by his own example; and honored in the most distinguished and wonderful manner, by every Person in the adorable *Trinity.* This ordinance is no *trivial* affair; it is no *mean* thing; and whoever is so unhappy as to despise it, wants eyes to see its beauty and excellency.——Our great Redeemer seems to have designed this ordinance as *a test* of our sincerity, and *to distinguish his followers* from the rest of mankind. As a captain who, to try a new soldier, employs him at first in some arduous and important service; so our Saviour, to try his own work, and to make the reality of his powerful grace in the hearts of his people manifest to themselves and to the world, calls them out at first to a great and singular action, and requires their submission to an institution that is disgustful to their nature and mortifying to their pride."

The pamphlet, from which these extracts are made, speaks of baptism, "As an act of *sublime worship* to the adorable persons in the Godhead—As a representation of the *sufferings of Christ*, his death, burial, and resurrection—As *the answer* of a good conscience towards God—As an emblem of *regeneration* and *sanctification*—As *a powerful obligation* to newness of life—And as a lively figure of *the natural death* of every Christian."*

Mr. Daniel Turner has also borne his testimony to the usefulness and importance of baptism. For, speaking of that ordinance, he says: "Christ himself submitted to this rite, as administered by John; not indeed with the same views, or to the same ends, with others; but as pointing out by his example, *the duty of Christians in general.* He also gave his ministers a commission and order, to baptize all the nations they taught.—It appears that being baptized, was the *common token* of subjection to Christ, *and*

* Six Views of Believers' Baptism, p. 1, 2, 3, 15.

necessary to a regular entrance into his visible church.' And, when describing the qualifications of those that are to be received into communion, he says; 'They should be acquainted with the chief design of the rites and positive institutions of Christianity, and *reverently use them;* viz. baptism, and the Lord's supper.' Once more: Speaking of that respect which the two positive appointments have to visible fellowship among believers, he says; '*Baptism*, indeed, by which we are first formally incorporated into the visible church, or body of Christ, is the *beginning* and *foundation* of this external communion: but the Lord's supper is best adapted for the constant support and continual manifestation of it.'* Nay, he mentions 'the *reverent use* of the two sacraments, among those things which are *essential* to the constitution of a particular visible church.'†

Those who argue against us in this matter are continually calling baptism a *non-essential, an external rite, a shadow*, an *outward form*, &c. The Lord's supper, however, is considered and treated by them in a different manner; for they speak of it as a *delightful*, an *edifying*, an *important* institution. But what authority have they for thus distinguishing between two appointments of the *same* Lord, intended for the *same persons*, of *equal continuance* in the Christian church, and *alike required* of proper subjects? They have, indeed, the *example* of some Socinians, and the *venerable sanction* of the whole Council of Trent. For the title of one chapter in the records of that Council, is; 'Concerning the excellence of the most holy Eucharist, *above the rest* of the sacraments.'‡ But as a good old Protestant writer observes, 'That the one sacrament should be so much extolled above the other, namely, the Lord's supper to be preferred before baptism, as the more worthy and excellent sacrament, we find no such thing in the word of God; but that both of them are of like dignity in themselves, and to be had equally in most high account.'§ Nay, Mr. Ryland assures us, 'That baptism ought to be con-

* Compend. Social Religion, p. 27. (Note;) and p. 63, 129. (Note.)
† See p. 5. Note. ‡ Council. Trident. Sess. XIII. Chap. III.
§ Willet's Synops. Papismi, p. 556, 557.

sidered as glorious an act of worship, *as ever was instituted by God.*'*—Might not the Jews of old have distinguished, with equal propriety, between circumcision and the paschal supper? Does it become us to form comparisons between the positive appointments of our Eternal Sovereign, in regard to their importance; and that with a view to dispense with either of them, while the very same authority enjoins the one as well as the other? Can such a conduct be pious, humble, or rational? Is it not something like being "partial in God's law," for which the ancient priests were severely censured? Or, shall we say of our obedience to God, as he says to the mighty ocean; "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further?"

But supposing it is evident, that baptism is *much inferior* to the sacred supper in point of importance; yet, while it is an ordinance of God, it has an equal claim on our obedience. For it is not the degree of excellence or utility of any divine appointment, that is the true reason of our submission to it; but the *authority* of Him that commands. "It hath been ever God's wont," says Bishop Hall, "by small precepts to prove men's dispositions. Obedience is as well tried in a trifle, as in the most important charge: yea, so much more, as the thing required is less: for oftentimes those who would be careful in main affairs, think they may neglect the smallest. What command soever we receive from God, or our superiors, we must not scan the *weight* of the thing, but the *authority* of the commander. Either difficulty, or slightness, are vain pretences for disobedience."† Nay, even Dr. Priestley, though remarkable for his liberal sentiments and rational way of thinking, and far from ascribing too much to God's dominion over the subjects of his moral government; yet strongly asserts Jehovah's prerogative in this respect. These are his words; 'Every divine command ought certainly to be *implicitly complied with*, even though we should not be able to discern the reason of it.' And has not He who is God over all blessed forever, said; "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and

* Beauty of Social Religion, p. 9.

† Contemplations, Vol. III. p. 274. Edinb. Edit.

shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven?" As in the great concerns of religious worship, nothing should be done that is not required by Jehovah: and as the lawfulness of all positive rites depends entirely on their divine Author and his institutions; so he who complies with some, and neglects others that are equally commanded and equally known, may please himself, but does not obey the Lord.

Further: These depreciating expressions, *non-essential*, *external rite*, *a shadow*, and *a mere outward form*, may be applied to the sacred supper with as much propriety as to baptism. Are not *bread* and *wine* external things, as well as *water?* And has not the act of *baptizing* as much *spirituality* in it, as the acts of *eating* and *drinking?* Besides, an apostle has assured us, that "the kingdom of God is not *meat* and *drink*," though the latter were the richest of cordials, any more than it is *immersion* in water.*

Once more: When I consider how much *more frequently* baptism is mentioned in the New Testament, than the sacred supper;† how often repenting and believing sinners are *exhorted*, by the apostles, to be baptized; how *soon* that ordinance was administered to Christian converts after they believed; what *exhortations* are given to professing Christians, on the ground of their being baptized; and when I reflect, that the Holy Spirit *commends* them that were baptized by John, as "justifying God:" while he *severely censures* others, as "rejecting the counsel of God against themselves," because they slighted the solemn appointment; I cannot but wonder at the depreciating language of our opponents in regard to baptism. —Their very singular conduct appears to me still more extraordinary, and yet more unwarrantable, when I reflect that baptism is a divine institution to which a believer submits but *once*, and a branch of divine worship that he is required to perform but *once;* in which respect it greatly differs from every other appointment in the worship of God, under the Christian economy. For, this being the case, one should have imagined, if notorious and stubborn facts had not forbidden the thought; that *every minister*

* Vid. Hoornbeck. ut supra, p. 362. † Hoornbeck. ut supra, p. 409, 416.

of Jesus Christ, and *every church* of the living God, would *insist* on a submission to what they consider as *real* baptism, in all whom they admit to the Lord's table. Dr. Ryland's words are, I think, none too strong when he says, (Beauty of Social Religion p. 9.) 'Baptism ought to be considered *as glorious an act of worship as ever was instituted by God.* It is to be performed but *once* in the life of a Christian—but *once* to eternity; and therefore, *it ought to be done* with the utmost veneration and love.'

SECTION VI.

Reflections.

It appears from the foregoing pages, that we act on a principle received in common by Christians of almost every name, in every age, and in every nation. When, therefore, we are compared with professing Christians in general, we have no peculiar claim to the epithet *strict.* Nor can we be otherwise than *strict*, without violating our own principles, and contradicting our own practice. For *we* believe that all who have received the truth, should profess their faith in Jesus Christ and be baptized, and have the happiness, in this respect, of agreeing with our brethren. If we conclude, that a believer is no further obliged by any divine precept, or prohibition, than he *sees* and *acknowledges* the obligation, in regard to himself, then a believer who has been baptized may live all his days in the neglect of communion at the Lord's table, and stand acquitted of blame; and covetousness is no crime in thousands who bow at the shrine of Mammon; for there are comparatively few lovers of money, who acknowledge their guilt in that respect. Nay, on this principle it will follow, that the more ignorant any believer is, and the less tender his conscience, he is under so much the less obligation to obey the divine commands. But the reader will do well to remember, that it is not our *conviction* of the propriety, the utility, or the necessity of any command which God has given, that entitles him to the performance of it; but, in all things of a moral nature, our being *rational creatures* is the ground of his claim; and in those of a

positive kind, our *being qualified* according to his direction, whether we be so wise and so sincere as to acknowledge the obligation or no. Thus it appears that the epithet *strict*, if taken in the sense already explained, is no dishonor to us.

But if, on the contrary, our brethren mean by the epithet, that we are *bigotted*, *unnecessarily exact*, *unscripturally confined;* their forwardness to give us this name calls for our censure. In the former sense, I will venture to affirm, every Baptist *ought* to be a *strict* one, or else to renounce the name. In the latter use of the term, we reject the distinguishing epithet, and require our opponents to prove—I say to *prove*, not to surmise, that it justly belongs to us.

Our character, then, is fixed. Their own pens have engrossed it. And, be it known to all men, we are *Strict Baptists*. To this character, as before explained, we subscribe with hand and heart, in the last words of the celebrated Father Paul, *Esto perpetua*.

Many of my readers know that our Pædobaptist brethren, when they have a mind to shew their wit and be a little merry at our expense, represent the Baptists, without distinction, as *exceedingly fond* of water; as professors that cannot *live* in a church state, without *a great deal of water*. Nay, one of them has very politely called us '*watery bigots;*' and then adds, 'Many ignorant sprinkled Christians are often, to their hurt, *pulled by them into the water.*'* According to this gentleman, then, we are *watery bigots*. Well, it does not greatly distress *me* to be thus represented by a sneering antagonist, because I really believe that *much water* is necessary to baptism, and am no less confident, that baptism is necessary to communion at the Lord's table.

And now, before I conclude, our brethren will suffer me also to remonstrate; and the reader may rest assured, that I do it without the least impeachment of their integrity—If infant sprinkling be a human invention, disown it, renounce it, entirely reject it, and no longer let it hold the place of a divine institution in any of your churches. For as there is but *one God*, and *one faith*, so there is but *one baptism*.

* Dr. Mayo's True Scripture Doctrine of Baptism, p. 33.

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No. 89.

ON BIGOTRY.

BY B. H. DRAPER, SOUTHAMPTON, ENG.

The subject of this tract is Bigotry. The object of the author is to define its real nature and essential properties and establish the criterion whereby it may be distinguished from genuine principle in the concerns of religion.

To accomplish this is confessedly somewhat difficult, as appears evident from the circumstance, that many persons of good general information, both in writing and conversation frequently use the term, without discrimination or propriety. On this account it is of great importance, since there is evidently such a thing as bigotry, accurately to define what it is; that so, wherever it appears, it may be known.

Bigotry, then, in matters of religion is, an unreasonable, unscriptural, and obstinate adherence to a party, or to sentiments, accompanied with oppressive and unjustifiable dispositions and conduct towards our fellow-creatures.

Bigotry has existed in every age of the world. It still exists, and is cherished among the very people who have boasted of its decease and its funeral. Epitaphs, in classical Latin, and some in plain English, have been written on the important and interesting occasion. I do not, however, find any inscription for its tomb, which is much more than a century old; nor am I aware, exactly how to account for this singular fact, but on the supposition, that, before this period, people had a greater sense of propriety than to write epitaphs for any beside the dead.

It is remarkable that all, even those who cherish Bigotry the most fondly, yet fully agree, that she is a most horrid monster; this indeed will be abundantly apparent, if we consider only for a moment what she is, and what she has done. Sometimes she has appeared unmasked, in all her native hideousness; false,

and cruel, and detestable, kindling her accursed firebrands at the flames of hell, and with unsparing and relentless hand, scattering ruin and death through the finest portions of the habitable globe. At other times she has assumed the garb of an angel of light, and, with the fairest professions, she has reigned, whilst she seemed to have but little influence, and secretly, silently, and effectually accomplished her infernal purposes.

Bigotry, political, literary, and religious, exists among all ranks, and professions. In reference to religion alone it is now presented for our consideration. Infidels, under the specious veil of universal candour, have proved themselves the most execrable of bigots. In France, a few years since, the sun of revelation underwent a total eclipse; the very sabbath was abolished, and death was proclaimed to be an eternal sleep. Infidelity and atheism were indeed awfully triumphant; but instead of its promised candour, and boundless toleration, the most hideous bigotry, crimes of gigantic magnitude, and horrible and unheard of massacres, were indeed the order of the day. "Cruel," says one who had the best opportunities for obtaining the most correct information on the subject, "as the aspect of the former government of France had been to the servants of Christ, the little finger of the monster infidelity, was found to be thicker than its predecessor's loins. The mouth of every confessor of the truth was stopped. The religious meetings among the Protestants were forced to be discontinued, and every Protestant minister was compelled to abandon his station. The goddess of reason was exalted to be worshipped, and private libraries were ransacked and pillaged of their religious books. Every Bible which could be found was burnt. Good writings of the old Reformers, or distinguished Protestants, were preserved from the universal destruction, only by being buried in the ground. The people were compelled to work openly on the Sundays, and punished by law if they did not, in order, if possible, to obliterate every trace that remained of the sanctification of the Sabbath-day. Such was the liberal and tolerating spirit of the infidel philosophy."*

* Mr. Robt. Haldane's speech on the behalf of the Continental Society. 89

Indeed, a person who manifests any zeal for the diffusion of infidel sentiments, must necessarily possess a considerable degree of Bigotry. "The dominion of Christianity," says the eloquent Robert Hall, "being in the very essence of it, the dominion of virtue, we need look no farther for the sources of hostility in any who oppose it, than their attachment to vice and disorder."

Many have made large claims to the exclusive possession of that Christian candour, which is the opposite of Bigotry, whilst they have strenuously inculcated an entire an awful indifference to the truth. Whether Christ be truly divine, or merely man,—whether men are to be saved by the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus, or by their own imaginary or real virtues, are with them, matters of no great importance. To compliment one another, as being doubtless in the road to eternal bliss, though there may be no deadness to sin, no life to righteousness, no affectionate attachment to the Saviour, and no ardent love to his blessed commands, is all that is deemed necessary, provided the external conduct be somewhat decent and polite. This view of the subject is, however, grossly erroneous. Indifference to the truth does by no means necessarily imply freedom from Bigotry, and certainly is not Christian candour. A man may hold the truth of God with a firm hand, so as never to surrender a single particle of it, and yet be no Bigot. If conscientious, undeviating, and intrepid attachment to truth be bigotry, then Christ, his apostles, and the noble army of martyrs, were some of the worst bigots that have ever disgraced our world. The individual who dares follow the plain dictates of God's holy word wherever they may lead him, may, and most likely will, be derided as a Bigot; but he has done nothing for which he ought to be branded with this opprobrious epithet. The person who tells me, that Jesus is a mere fallible, peccable man,—that his blood has no peculiar merit in the sight of God, and has no connexion whatever with the remission of sin,—that disobedience to the divine commands is a trifling evil, —that we are at liberty to reject, modify, or treat with indifference, any even of the minor precepts of divine

revelation,—and that, if I do not bow to his authority, and believe his assertions, I am a bigot,—excites in my bosom no emotions but those of pity. I would be far, however, very far, from doing, or even wishing any injury to such an individual; on the contrary, I would be sincerely concerned for his present and eternal welfare. But I would grasp my Bible, and tell him, that Jesus made the world, John i. 10.—that he was God, manifest in the flesh, 1 Tim. iii. 16.—that he was wounded for our transgressions, that the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all, Isa. liii. 5, 6.—that his blood cleanseth from all sin, 1 John i. 7.—that it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against God, and that the wages of sin is death, Rom. vi. 23.—and that he who shall break one of the least of Christ's commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven, Matt. v. 19. O no,—a firm attachment to the truth of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, is a noble principle, of divine origin, implanted in the human heart by God himself, and is indeed infinitely removed from that odious thing we justly denominate Bigotry.

It cannot excite wonder that a produce so corrupt as Bigotry, should be found on the malignant tree of infidelity; for no one can rationally expect "to gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles;" but that so hateful a production should be found among professing Christians, may indeed be justly regarded as matter of astonishment.—And yet, "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the uncircumcised triumph,"—its dwelling is among the sons of God,—it has taken up its abode in the professing church,—there it appears

> ——————"in double shape,
> Half is a murd'ring wolf, and half a mimic ape."

Yes, lamentable to relate, it has been found, and still exists, among professing Christians of various denominations; and what is still more surprising, there have been, and there still are, even good men, and some of great name too,—(though certainly this is no part of

their goodness,) who may, with but too much propriety, be justly charged with the abominable sin of Bigotry. But to be more particular, I remark,

That he who detests, or is evidently unfriendly to any person because he is not altogether of his opinion, is a bigot. A Christian ought to regard the whole of the human race as children of one common father, according to our Lord's instructions in the parable of the Good Samaritan, and to treat every one with kindness. When an individual virtually, if not really, stands up, and says, I expect every one to believe as I believe, and to affirm what I affirm, or I will avoid, proscribe, and persecute him, he should produce his authority for this monstrous claim, or he may reasonably expect to meet with unqualified and merited contempt. Such a disposition is entirely unsanctioned by Scripture, which enjoins us to love our neighbour as ourselves, —and by right reason also, since it is not doing to others as we would have them do to ourselves. Christianity, not that indeed of blind interested bigots, but the Christianity of the New Testament, is most emphatically, love. He cannot be a Christian, notwithstanding all his professions, who does not love his fellow-creatures.

The man who employs abusive or improper terms in defending his sentiments, though they may be just and scriptural, is chargeable with Bigotry. This practice was shamefully common about the time of the Reformation, and even among the principal Reformers. Luther, I think, rather excelled Calvin in this unenviable art, though Calvin was but too well skilled in it.* The Scriptures utterly discountenance such a practice. It is said, that Michael durst not bring a *railing* accusation even against Satan, but only said, "The Lord rebuke thee!" Our Lord declared that whosoever should call "his brother a fool, should be in danger of hell fire." And was not his glorious example in perfect harmony with his charming instructions? It was. "When reviled, he reviled not again,—when rebuked,

* The late Bishop Warburton, speaking of Mr. Romaine, says, "This is the *scoundrel* I wrote to, but the *poor devil* has done his own business."—*Warburton's Letters.*

he threatened not; but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously." Christianity needs not that such unhallowed weapons should be used in its defence. Its noblest and most successful champions have scorned to gird on any other armour, than such as is "lovely, and of good report." If the Bible be our guide, we shall be sincerely concerned to speak the truth in love. And if the dictates of reason influence us, instead of those of Bigotry, we shall never forget that, if we could collect all the abusive epithets that have ever been recorded, or even imagined, we might with the strictest propriety affirm, that collectively they prove nothing but our own depravity.

The individuals, or parties, who anathematize all that are not of their own communion, are bigots. Our Lord's own disciples manifested somewhat of this unhallowed disposition, when they saw a person casting out devils, and they forbad him, for no better reason than this, because he followed not with them; the Saviour reproved them, and bade them recollect that "he who is not against us is for us." The Pharisees, with boundless pride and Bigotry, stood up, and said, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we!" and boldly and impiously pronounced those who differed from them, or who were not possessed of their religious knowledge, accursed. The Roman Catholic church is notorious for its anathemas against all who are without its intolerant pale. The following is the language of one of its councils, and its conduct has ever been in unison with its professed sentiments: "Whosoever, therefore, is separated from the Catholic church, notwithstanding his conduct in other respects may be excellent, he shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."* A similar disposition and conduct has ever been manifested by all worldly establishments of religion. A large proportion of their adherents, with the most entire complacency, unite with the intolerant Daubeny in giving up the numerous millions who dissent from them, to use their own language,

*Quisquis ergo ab hac Catholica ecclesia fuerit separatus, quantumlibet laudabiliter se vivere existimet, non habebit vitam, sed *ira Dei manet super eum.* Conc. Numid. A. D. 412.

"to the uncovenanted mercies of God." Such men seem to find a pleasure in cursing their fellow-creatures. Thus the old chancellor Tellier, in the reign of Louis XIV. earnestly entreated that the *most Christian king** would hasten the revocation of the edict of Nantz, lest he should leave the world without the extatic pleasure of putting his seal to it. How an event that was to deprive two millions of people, and of his countrymen too, of their liberties, and of all that was most dear to them, and consign immense multitudes to captivity, and extreme torture, could afford any one enjoyment, it is indeed difficult to conceive. What a perversity, what an infatuation of understanding! what a depravity of heart! what monstrous cruelty! The Danish bishop, who wished to be transformed into a devil, that he might have the exquisite delight of tormenting in hell the heretic soul of king Frederick, appears indeed to have been a very near relative of this miserable individual.

This anathematizing spirit is in the highest degree mean, ungenerous, unrighteous and abominable, and is the very essence of Bigotry. Where is there any reason in cursing all who may differ from us in matters of comparatively inferior moment, when it is an unquestionable fact, that excellent men, real Christians, the friends of God and of the human race, have been found among all denominations of professing Christians, not even excepting the Roman Catholic community, obviously the most corrupt on the face of the earth? And assuredly the Scriptures do not in the smallest degree sanction this detestable conduct, since they affirm, and that too in the plainest manner, that those who repent of their transgressions, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and obey his commandments, shall, whether anathematized or not, be finally and eternally saved.

The Bigot very frequently expends his principal zeal on trivial things, whilst he neglects matters of the high-

* It is well remarked by R. Robinson, that "if right reason and religion were to compose a just title for such a man, it might call him, *a most inhuman tyrant*, certainly it would not call him '*a most Christian king*.'"

est importance. This was evidently the case with the Pharisees; our Lord sharply reproved them on this account: "Wo," said he, "unto you Scribes and Pharisees! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone. Ye blind guides! which strain at [out] a gnat, and swallow a camel!" Matt. xxiii. 23, 24.

He is a Bigot, whose conduct makes it evident, that his chief aim is the establishment of a party, or the gratification of worldly dispositions, and not the furtherance of the truth. An individual of this class, and, unfortunately, it is very numerous, may be readily known by the following plain and infallible marks: he obstinately refuses to do any manner of good, however he may have it in his power, and whatever opportunities may be presented to him, out of his own community. Present to him a case for the support of schools in some part of the world, where the people are enveloped in the grossest superstition and darkness, and in which no books whatever, beside the New Testament, and an introductory primer, perfectly unexceptionable, are used, and he may admire your benevolence, and has nothing to say against the charity, but he cannot, that is, his excessive bigotry will not let him do a generous action—he cannot do any thing out of his church. Ask for his aid in the translation of the Scriptures for gratuitous distribution among the millions of the perishing heathen, and still, though it is exceedingly difficult to imagine how, in the remotest manner, his church could possibly be injured, he sings the same song, he cannot, no indeed he cannot, do any thing out of his church. Bigotry, unrelenting, downright Bigotry, seals his pocket up so closely, that no effort, however urgent and impressive, can open it, and steels his heart so impenetrably, that it is but rarely conscious of a single generous and compassionate feeling, towards the multitudes of his fellow-creatures who are immersed in wretchedness and barbarism.

Much praise is due to the liberality and kindness of many gentlemen, who, though not *altogether* agreeing

with an applicant in every religious sentiment, have nevertheless freely and nobly contributed to the erection of places for the spread of the gospel, or the accommodation of Christian worship. It must, however, also be owned, that a very offensive spirit of Bigotry has been sometimes manifested on these occasions. When a minister, in reply to inquiry, has acknowledged that he belonged to the Baptist denomination, the very mention of the term has excited a torrent of abuse on the individual himself, and on the body of Christians to whom he has belonged. Now, is this doing as we would be done unto? Is not such a conduct a grievous sin even against common courtesy? Would not a well-bred individual, of no pretensions to piety, disdain such ungenerous conduct? And is a person to be justified, in regarding a respectable stranger, asking aid in the cause of Christ, with contempt or ill-treatment, because he has the courage to think for himself in matters of religion, and the honesty to avow that he does so? Does not the person who thus demeans himself, loudly say, "How *dare* you differ, even a single shade, from so distinguished a personage as myself?" Is this the spirit of Christianity? Is this a practical regard of his instructions, who bade the greatest in his family become the servant of all? It is no extenuation of the fault of such an individual, to say, that he is a man of consequence and wealth, and a very useful person. This is an aggravation of his guilt; for on these accounts it is more imperatively incumbent on him to adopt a line of conduct, at once amiable, conciliatory, liberal, and condescending. Such behaviour is both ungentlemanlike, and unchristian, and is the evident and most offensive offspring of Bigotry.

Another mark of the persons who are here alluded to, is, that they regard almost all kind of means as lawful that they think may tend to the establishment and prosperity of their party. Hence has arisen the manifold, pious, but detestable frauds of the Romish church. Thus persons of this class will zealously propagate gross calumnies, and oftentimes indeed in-

vent, as well as give them currency. When an individual apostatizes from his profession, they assiduously

> "Reproach a people with his single fall,
> And cast his filthy raiment at them all,"

Affirming, wherever they have opportunity, that all of the same community are equally vile. The mere stickler of a party has been known publicly and bitterly to inveigh against his brethren, who think it right to baptize on a profession of faith, and by immersion only; and at the same time in private, rather than have his party weakened, or lose a rich member of his own society, to administer that ordinance in his own habitation, and in the very manner too, which he has so vehemently arraigned.

The truly candid Christian, in opposition to the bigot, cleaves to the truth, and follows it wherever it may lead him. He dares to be honest to his conscience, notwithstanding many temptations to be otherwise. He rejoices in the extension of truth, among all denominations, and in every part of the habitable globe His attachment is not to any party of Christians, as such, but to the truth. He holds it with a firm untrembling hand; and binds it joyfully to his heart, as one who has found great spoil, whether it is fashionable or not, whether men smile or frown, and whether they reward or punish him. He utterly disdains to serve a good cause by the base arts of low cunning, detestable falsehood, or impious malignity. He can stand erect, and say with Cowper,

> "And truth alone, where'er my lot be cast,
> 'Midst scenes of plenty, or the pining waste,
> Shall be my chosen theme, my glory to the last."

Dogmatically to decide on a subject, with a very slender knowledge of it, and without having diligently examined it, arises commonly from bigotry. How unreasonable is such a line of conduct: there can be no propriety in a man's decisions in reference to sentiments he has never investigated. The holy and liberal men who wrote the sacred volume, were not ecclesiastical ty-

rants; they wished their readers "to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good;" and they have commended it as a noble disposition, not to believe any thing without examination, and a conviction of its truth. But a bigot expects and demands that you should receive his assertions for proofs. Thus the infidel Paine, affirmed that the Bible was unworthy of any attention, and that he had answered it before he had read it!

This disposition is often evident, not only in reference to opinions, but also to characters. Thus I recollect an individual who affirmed, that a minister in his neighbourhood was not a Calvinist. Somewhat surprised, I said, "Not a Calvinist! then, what is he?" "O, don't you know?—he is a Fullerite!" was the reply. Merely to ascertain whether he knew any thing of the subject, I said, "Indeed!—Will you have the kindness to mention some principles of Calvinism, which Mr. F. did not maintain?" "I shall not trouble myself to do this," said he—"but he was not a Calvinist—of that I am certain." "Well," I rejoined, "did you ever read his writings?" "O no," said he, "nor do I intend it; every one knows that he was no Calvinist." What can we call such a dogmatical spirit, and there is much of it in the world, but downright bigotry?

Pride, overbearing pride, is the inseparable companion of bigotry. Perhaps it may with propriety be affirmed that a man's pride is always in proportion to his bigotry. He who is clothed with humility can never manifest this unhallowed disposition. Leighton, though an arch-bishop, was not, and for this reason never could have been, a bigot. In reference to his kind, conciliating, and truly christian temper, I would indeed say, Let him be imitated.*

Bearing false witness, either in speaking or writing against those who differ from us in opinion, arises usually from bigotry. Instances of this kind are frequently occurring, and are lamentably numerous. Thus some individual, not long since, published an account of the miserable faction that disgraced and afflicted the town

* Illum agit penna metuente solvi
Fama superstes.

of Munster about the time of the Reformation, and called it a History of the Baptists, though he was well aware, that the Baptists of the present day have no principles in common with those wretched people. This was bearing false witness to serve party purposes.

Professing to take the Bible as our sole guide in matters of religion, and yet refusing to submit to plain scriptural authority, commonly arises from Bigotry. Thus, when Dr. Priestly met with a passage in the Gospel by John asserting the pre-existence of Christ, though he could not but acknowledge that this was the case, yet he would by no means admit the doctrine to be true. He would suppose, he says, that the apostle dictated one thing, and his amanuensis wrote another; or that John was superannuated, and did not know what he wrote; or, he would suppose any thing, and every thing, rather than give credit to the sentiment.* Thus also, a host of writers,† Bishop Saunderson,‡ Calvin,§ Bishop Burnet,‖ and a multitude of others, of great name, have testified, and deliberately left their opinions on record, that there is no precept or example in the New Testament for infant baptism, and yet, with glaring inconsistency, continued to practise it. How can this be accounted for, but from a bigoted attachment to a creed, whether its sentiments are scriptural or not.

Those who would in any way whatever injure their fellow-creatures on account of their religious sentiments, are evidently some of the worst of Bigots. Thus all persecutors are justly chargeable with this detestable vice. Here, indeed, it is seen in all its native horrors, full grown, and as diabolical as gigantic. It may not, perhaps, be amiss to present a single specimen of its infernal labours. In reference to the Protestants in France, it is said, "The bloody butchers invented a thousand torments to tire their patience, and to force

* Magee on the Atonement, p. 85, 86.

† See an invaluable work, entitled, Pædobaptism Examined, by the venerable Abraham Booth. See also Pengilly's Scripture Guide to Baptism, Tract No. 45.

‡ De Oblig. Conscient. Prælect. iv. sect. 17, 18.

§ Instit. lib. 4 c. 16.

‖ Expos. of 39 Art. p. 306. Art. 27.

them to abjure their sentiments. They cast some into large fires, and took them out when they were half-roasted. They hanged others, with large ropes under their arm-pits, and plunged them several times into wells, till they promised to renounce their religion. They tied them like criminals to the rack, and poured wine, with a funnel, into their mouths, till, being intoxicated, they consented to turn Catholics. Some they slashed and cut with pen-knives, others they took by the nose with red-hot tongs, and led them up and down the room till they promised to turn Catholics."*

No individual or community has a right to injure another in his good name, person, or substance, on account of his religious sentiments. God causes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and his rain to descend on the thankful and on the unthankful. And if we are what we ought to be, and profess to be, real Christians, we shall strive to imitate our heavenly Father. It may be pointedly put to every persecutor, What hast thou to do with another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Those who persecute, get into the throne of God, and take his sword of vengeance from his hands. What impious presumption! what boundless arrogance! Even Luther, and Calvin, and Cranmer, as well as other Reformers, who ought to have known better, on this account are justly to be censured. Is it the way to convince a man of the truth and excellence of Christianity, to seize his property, to afflict his person, or to immure him in a dungeon? Persecution has made tens of thousands of martyrs, and multitudes of hypocrites, but never one real Christian. If there be any passage in the New Testament which authorizes violence and injustice towards even the vilest of the human race, let it be produced. Every degree of persecution is a most

* Robinson's Hist. of the Reformation in France, prefixed to Vol. I. of Saurin's Sermons. If the reader would like to see one of the most affecting and interesting narratives of the same kind, that was ever penned, let him turn to Jones's History of the Waldenses. There indeed he will see the havoc that has been made by the monster Bigotry.

outrageous wrong, and should meet with general and unqualified reprobation.

The great and illustrious Founder of Christianity, when his disciples wanted to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans, rebuked them sharply, and justly said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of! The Son of man is come, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Christianity, divine Christianity, the Christianity of the New Testament, and not that of persecuting statesmen and ecclesiastical tyrants, unrivalled in excellence and grandeur, every where gloriously breathes, and powerfully inculcates the animating and ennobling sentiments of the angelic hymn, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and GOOD WILL TOWARDS MEN." A man must trample on its plainest dictates, and become a most detestable bigot, before he can assume the character of a persecutor.

"I am sick of almost every thing," says the amiable Pearce, "that has been called religion, but love; supreme love to God, universal benevolence to man. I am enraptured at the thought, that all the objects which Christianity requires me to believe, are to be contemplated with delight. It is all love; love is the alpha, love is the omega. It originated in love. It is exemplified in love. It works by love. It terminates in perfect, universal love. Thanks be to God for this unspeakable gift, this religion of love!"

Well, on all hands, Bigotry is allowed to be a most horrible evil, and to be wholly indefensible. But how shall it be cured? This is the all-important question. I know of but one effectual remedy—it is a large portion of the benevolent, devotional, Christ-like spirit which is every where inculcated in the New Testament. I never knew a person imbued with the spirit of the Saviour, filled with love to God, and to his fellow-creatures, (and this is the only religion of which God will approve, the religion indeed of the Bible, and which alone can make man happy,) who was a Bigot. Such an individual, in the whole of his deportment, must necessarily be a living display of that beautiful

picture, drawn by a hand under the immediate guidance of all-inspiring heaven, which is in the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the church at Corinth. This holy and divine temper is the very opposite to Bigotry. "It suffereth long, and is kind; it envieth not; vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity; but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things." I am not surprised that he who drew this exquisite portrait, adds, "It never faileth!" This is indeed the grace

> ———"that lives and sings,
> When faith and hope shall cease;
> 'Tis this shall strike our joyful strings,
> In the sweet realms of bliss."

And unless we possess it, though we could speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and had faith even to remove mountains, our professions of Christianity are vain,—we are "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

The criterion then by which the truly candid Christian may be distinguished from the Bigot is evident. The Bigot is notoriously wanting in love to his fellow-creatures—defends false, or even well-founded sentiments, in an unchristian spirit and temper—frequently anathematizes those who are not altogether of his own communion—often expends his principal zeal on comparatively trivial things, and pays very little attention to matters of the highest moment—aims at the establishment of a party, or the gratification of mere worldly dispositions, rather than the furtherance of the truth—proudly decides on a subject, and that too many times without having duly examined it—is not very scrupulous in reference to the means he employs against those who differ from him in opinion—professes to regard the Scriptures as his only guide in matters of religion, and yet in plain cases refuses to submit to their authority—and finally he cherishes the disposition to persecute, if he be not actually a persecutor.

The truly candid Christian, on the other hand, sincerely loves all his fellow-creatures, especially his fellow-christians, however they may differ from him in opinion. When he defends the truth, the law of kindness is on his lips and in his heart, and flows from his pen—he trembles at the thought of taking God's judgment-seat, and of cursing any of his fellow-christians—he rejoices in every part of divine truth, and holds it with a firm hand, but he is principally concerned for the vital doctrines of Christianity—he aims at the furtherance of the truth, and the glory of God, more than at the prosperity of any party whatever—he searches the Scriptures diligently, before he will decide on any important point, to see if the things affirmed are so, or not—scorns to serve even the truth by dishonest means—conscientiously follows the Bible wherever it leads him—and is sincerely and affectionately concerned for the present and everlasting welfare of the human race.

If I were to mention a single criterion by which Bigotry may be generally and immediately known, I would say, It is a want of that spirit of love which is every where inculcated by the New Testament, and which was delightfully exemplified in the character of our divine Redeemer, and his immediate disciples.

The time will indeed arrive, it is foretold in the sure page of prophecy, when "none shall hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain; when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them;" then, and perhaps not till then, this monster shall die, and be buried. Happy day! glorious end! O that it were indeed already come! then, having witnessed the interment, I would not indeed write its epitaph, but flee afar

"The pois'nous steams, and stenches of its sepulchre;
And lift my hands to heaven, and pray,—
That such a hateful creature never may,
At any time obtain a resurrection day."

No. 124.

THE DUTY

OF GIVING

CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION

TO

CHILDREN.

A Letter written by IRAH CHASE; addressed, in 1831, by the Boston Association, and now by the Tract Society, to Parents and others connected with Baptist Churches.

Dear Brethren,—It is not to a novel subject, but to one which, nevertheless, must always possess a fresh and touching interest, that we now solicit your attention—THE DUTY OF GIVING CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION TO CHILDREN.

This duty is, in the first place, *the dictate of reason and affection.*

Reason requires that the ignorant be instructed. And the more important the knowledge, the stronger is the argument for its being communicated. And the greater our affection for the persons needing instruction, the more intense is our desire to have them instructed. Who does not pronounce it suitable that children be taught those things which may be useful to them in the present life? and who that loves his children does not desire to have them taught? Now, we take it for granted, that the knowledge of the Christian religion is more valuable than the knowledge of any other subject; for it fills the mind with the brightest conceptions of purity and benevolence; and it is connected with what has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. It is, then, most manifestly and most emphatically, the dictate of reason and affection, that Christian instruction be given to children.

Besides, *this duty is clearly implied in the general direction to make the gospel known.*

In the command of our Saviour, *Preach the gospel to every creature*, it is clear that he would have Christian instruction given to all who are capable of being instructed. The common sense of every man understands the direction as having reference to moral agents only, and to all moral agents belonging to the human family. The gospel is to be preached to all; and we are to encourage its ministers to go forth to instruct the most distant nations. Surely then, our own children are not to be neglected; but as soon as they can understand, they are to be taught the simple and affecting story of our redemption, the first principles of the oracles of God.

But further, *the duty of giving Christian instruction to children, is expressly enjoined.* The sacred Scriptures exhibit this duty in the most direct and positive manner: *Provoke not your children to wrath*, says an apostle, *but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.** *Nurture* is the more general term, indicating the education, or training up of children, which, we know, comprehends instruction and example, rewards and punishments, and whatever may be necessary in this work. *Admonition*, as here used, directs our attention particularly to the mind of the child, as that with which we have especially to do; and we are here taught that this nurture and admonition, or instilling into the mind, must be conformable to the Spirit and instructions of our Lord.

So clear and prominent is the duty. It is the manifest dictate of reason and affection; it is implied in the general direction to make the gospel known; and it is expressly enjoined. It rests, therefore, on an immovable foundation; and we need no other.

In view of these considerations, it is to be hoped that we shall all feel the force of the obligations that rest upon us. But it may be useful to mention some additional considerations by which also we should be urged to the performance of this duty.

*Eph 6: 4.

Consider *the susceptibility of the mind in childhood.*

This has always been proverbial. In childhood the mind has not the prejudices with which it is likely to be filled at a later period. It is more candid; and the impressions which it then receives, are the most likely to be permanent. The evil propensity has not become strengthened by long habits of thinking and acting in an unworthy and unchristian manner. The child exhibits a frankness, and deference, and docility, the most encouraging. And we know that if his mind be not early imbued with correct sentiments, it will be with false and pernicious ones.

Consider *the effect on the community.*

Children will be either blessings or curses to their parents and to the community. Think of a child brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. You may hope to see him dutiful to his parents, their delight and their glory. Follow him through the periods of youth and of manhood. What a salutary influence he exerts on all his companions! and what a profusion of benefits does he scatter around him, in whatever sphere he may move. 'Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.'*

But, on the other hand, think of the unhappy child, that has not received Christian instruction. What can you expect but that he will be the *grief of his mother?* Destitute of Christian principle, he will be the easy victim of temptation. He corrupts the principles and habits of others. Or, if he does not absolutely become a pest in society, he at least fails of doing that amount of good which he might have been the honored instrument of accomplishing. Should he, at mature age, through the riches of divine grace, become truly religious, how will he deplore, that in childhood his Christian education was neglected, and that from a child he had *not* known the holy scriptures.

In a few years, the dearest interests of the community will be in the hands of those who are now children. How important that we do what we can to

* Prov. 22 : 6.

cause that the generation which shall arise, may be a generation to praise the Lord, and to diffuse throughout all the walks of life, a pure and happy influence.

Consider *the consequences beyond the grave.*

If a child be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, there is reason to trust not only that this Christian instruction will have a good influence upon him in the present life, but also that it will be so blessed as to make him 'wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.'* But if a child grow up in ignorance and contempt of Christian truth and duty, there is an alarming probability not only that he will be worse than useless in this life, but also that he will die in his sins, and fall under the solemn declaration of the Saviour, *Whither I go, ye cannot come.*†

Most of those in a Christian land who have given evidence of having become truly pious, we have reason to believe, had some truths of the gospel deeply impressed on their minds at an early age. The seed of divine truth sown in the tender mind, may lie buried long, but we may hope it will not be lost.

Yes, for this we may hope and pray. How often has the recollection of truths affectionately inculcated in childhood, been brought afresh to the mind at a later period, with an overwhelming power. The tongue of the faithful parent may now be silent in the grave; and the eye that once beamed on the child with parental and Christian love, may now be seen no more; but the instruction, and the patience, and tender solicitude with which it was imparted, fill the soul of the hitherto careless wanderer with deep emotion, and become the most prominent among the means of his conversion to God.

In this view of the matter, there is, certainly, great encouragement, but there is still greater in another view which we are permitted to take. As connected with the truly Christian instruction of our children, we may hope, and we should hope, for their early conversion,—for their being brought even in early childhood, to a saving acquaintance with religion, to

* 2 Tim. 3: 15. † John 8: 21, 22.

repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Why should we not? The gospel is remarkable for its simplicity, a child may understand it; many a young child has understood it, so far as its first principles are concerned, and has felt its heavenly power, and given ample evidence of being truly regenerate.

In the time of our Saviour, there were such children. And it is not improbable that he selected one of these, when he rebuked the ambitious contention of his disciples. On this occasion, according to the record of Matthew, 'Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.'* In Luke, this last declaration is expressed thus: 'Whosoever shall receive *this child* in my name, receiveth me.'† And Matthew immediately adds the words of the Saviour, 'But whoso shall offend,' or cause to sin, *one of these little ones that believe in me*, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.'

On another occasion, there were brought unto our Lord little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, 'Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'‡ 'Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, he shall not enter therein.'§

In these passages and the parallel ones, the original words rendered child, little ones, little children, and infants, may indicate children of such an age as to be capable of receiving religious instruction. This every one acquainted with the Greek, must know; and it has been abundantly shown by the ablest interpreters. Even the word which at first sight would here seem

* Matt. 18: 2–5. † Luke 9: 48. ‡ Matt. 19: 13, 14. § Mark 10: 15.

to be the most unfavorable to this representation, (the word in Luke rendered *infants*,) is the very word which the apostle Paul uses when he says to Timothy, 'From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures.'

If, on these occasions of teaching humility to his disciples, our Lord directed their attention to children, on account merely of the simplicity and meekness which belong, in a remarkable degree, to children generally, his teaching was beautiful and impressive, and if he directed their attention to children, who besides possessing these qualities in common with other children, had received the truth in the love of it, his teaching was, certainly, still more beautiful and impressive.

That there were such children in his time, is evident from the 21st chapter of Matthew,* where it is stated: 'When the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, hosanna to the son of David, they were displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, thou hast perfected praise?'

This is a quotation from the eighth Psalm, and, it being poetry, it is somewhat hyperbolical, according to the poetic manner; but the idea intended to be exhibited is perfectly manifest, namely, that God is pleased when young children feel his love, and utter his praise.

Instances of early piety have occurred in almost every age of the world; and they are not rare in our own country at the present time. Within the circle of our own observation, and particularly in those places where special attention has been paid to the subject of religion, many a striking and lovely example of this kind has presented itself; and we have been most happily taught the force of the passage which has just been repeated: *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, thou hast perfected praise.* Indeed, there is abundant proof that genuine conversions may

* Verses 15, 16.

occur, and that they have occurred, at a very early period.

Why, then, we ask again, why should we not hope and labor, and pray for such a blessing in respect to our own children? And who can refuse thus to exert himself, when he thinks of the consequences which may ensue beyond the grave?

Consider *the uncertainty of life.*

There is uncertainty in respect to our *own* lives. Soon our children may be called to weep over our lifeless remains, and be left amidst the dangers of an ensnaring and sinful world. Ah! how can we answer for it, if we neglect the precious opportunities which we now enjoy for bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

There is uncertainty in respect to *their* lives. How often does the loveliest blossom droop and fade away before our eyes! Shall not we do without delay what God himself has commanded us to do, in order that each, whenever removed, may be transplanted to his own garden on high?

We must remember, that, dear and lovely as our children may be, they need to be regenerated and saved through Jesus Christ; that *all have sinned*, and that, just so far as they are sinners, they need to repent, and to receive forgiveness through a child-like reliance on our condescending Lord. The time allotted them may be short. Death is almost daily entering some of our families; and none can tell either how soon, or how suddenly, any one of the dear children committed to our care may be torn away. Now is the precious opportunity of instructing their tender minds, and pointing them to the Lamb of God. The opportunity may soon be gone. How bitter must then be the remembrance of having neglected our duty! How sweet, the consolation of having faithfully performed it!

Christian instruction, as we have seen, must not only be given to children; but it must also be given *in an affectionate and engaging manner.*

'Provoke not,' says the apostle, 'provoke not your

children to wrath.' This is, indeed, a general direction; and it is a most important admonition in respect to all our intercourse with children; but it applies, with peculiar force, to our efforts for their spiritual and eternal benefit. It teaches us to guard against a repulsive austerity and moroseness, and to let our whole manner of communicating instruction and admonition be the manifest dictate of love. While we present unadulterated Christian truth, we must endeavor to present it so affectionately as, if possible, to disarm the enmity of the natural heart. And we must let our little listeners clearly perceive not only that *we* love them, but that *God* loves them, and requires of them only what is necessary to their highest happiness. We must show them that it is *the way of transgressors that is hard;* but that 'the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'

We must do our utmost to excite and keep up in the tender mind, a cheerful attention to the various things involved in a religious education. This is evident from a parallel passage, in the epistle to the Collosians,* where the apostle says expressly, 'Provoke not your children to anger, *lest they be discouraged.*' Clearly, then, we must, according to the circumstances in which we are placed, take those measures which are the best adapted to encourage our children in all that is right and useful, and especially in receiving Christian instruction.

The duty of giving such instruction is directly and explicitly enjoined upon parents; and they cannot be exonerated from performing it, so far as it may be in their power. Parents, it is most obvious, have peculiar advantages for influencing the minds of their children. And who that has the heart of a parent, does not ardently desire to be qualified for performing, in the happiest manner, so endearing and responsible a work? Who that has the heart of a parent, does not hear a voice from heaven, saying, 'These words shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when

* 3: 21.

thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.'*

But while parents cannot be released from the obligation to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, they may find that one of the best means of doing this, is to employ the aid of others. It may greatly contribute to the attainment of the grand object, and yet leave much for parents themselves to perform. It may, in our circumstances, possess various manifest advantages. And it may be admirably adapted to encourage our children, and to extend to the children of others the same benefits which we would confer upon our own. Whenever this is the case, it is most obvious that the aid of others should be sought. And all must admit that this is now pre-eminently the case with respect to the aid which is found in *the Lord's-day school.* If any man doubt it, let him be more fully informed on the subject. If he still doubt it, let him nevertheless see to it that he himself neglect not the duty *expressly* enjoined in the scriptures. Let him think on the value of religious instruction to his own children; let him think on its value to the children of his neighbors; let him bear them on his heart in prayer to God; and we may hope that his doubts will soon pass away.

We, dear brethren, are fully persuaded in our own minds. We see how happily the idea of Christian instruction in the family, and in the Lord's-day school, accords with all that we, as Baptists, believe to be the mind of Christ. Let us convince our erring brethren of other denominations, that his disciples can feel the force of the divine command, *Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, without performing a ceremony that has *not* been commanded, and that would displace and annihilate a ceremony that has been commanded,—the solemn act of the believer's being baptized upon the profession of his faith in Him who died for him, and rose again.

At no former period have our churches felt a deeper interest in Lord's-day schools, and Bible classes; and

*Deut. 6: 6, 7.

some of them are bringing increased attention to these methods of doing good, into a close and endearing connection with their respective associations. Thus they ascertain what has been done, and what remains to be done: they are benefitted by each other's experience; they take sweet counsel together, they consider how they can help and encourage each other, and they return home with new zeal, and with new confidence, that their labors in this, and in other spheres of duty will not be in vain.

On the subject of which we have been treating, as well as in all other truly Christian enterprises, it surely becomes us as a denomination, to be among the foremost of those who exhibit and exemplify 'encouragements to religious effort.' Let us thank God, and take courage, in view of what has already been accomplished for the rising generation, and in view of the indications which we are permitted to behold, that a brighter day is dawning upon the world.

In the course of the year past, a divine blessing has attended the ordinary and the extraordinary means of grace enjoyed in the churches. Multitudes have been converted to God. But amidst the various efforts that have been so signally honored, the duty of giving Christian instruction to children, still holds a prominent place. It must not, and it cannot be forgotten; for it possesses an enduring importance which no event has diminished, and which no language can adequately express.

We have seen on what a deep and broad foundation this duty rests: It is the manifest dictate of reason and affection; it is implied in the general direction to make the gospel known, and it is expressly enjoined. We have glanced at some of the other considerations, by which the duty is urged upon us; the susceptibility of the mind in childhood; the effect on the community; the consequences beyond the grave; and the uncertainty of life,—of our own lives, and of the lives of our children. And we have seen that this duty must be performed in the most affectionate and engaging manner, that, accordingly, and as one of the means of attaining the grand object, the aid of the

Lord's-day school should be employed for our own children, and for the children of others, and yet that we who are parents should remember, *we ourselves still have much to perform.* Here is ample scope for the efforts of teachers and of parents. Here is a great and most blessed work to be done, and it may well call forth the unwearied attention of pastors and churches, and of all that can render assistance. Momentous responsibilities rest upon us all. On every side we see the dear young immortals intrusted to our care. Shall they be formed for usefulness and glory, and bliss? Or shall they be neglected, and ruined for time and for eternity? O may we abound in prayer to God for them and for ourselves. *Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children, and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands, establish* THOU *it.*

Praying thus, brethren, we proceed with new courage, we bid you *God speed*, and continue, as ever, yours in faith and love.

APPENDIX.

The following remarks, from an address by a dear and highly esteemed brother and fellow-laborer, Professor Ripley, of Newton, are so important and so intimately connected with the subject of the preceding Letter, that they cannot fail of being read with interest and with profit.

It is the obvious dictate of revelation, and strong principles natural to the human heart coincide with this dictate, that parents should have much to do with the religious instruction of their children. The natural affection which a parent must feel for his offspring, and the confidence which a child reposes on the instructions of his parents, are peculiarly favorable circumstances. Besides, who, like a judicious parent, can seize the proper times, and deal out instruction in the proper measures? Who like him can bear with the peevishness and childishness of the

little scholar, and can know when to curb and when to excite? With parental instruction, nothing should be allowed to interfere. But unless I greatly mistake, there is danger that many parents may feel themselves exempted from this duty, in consequence of the advantages which the Sabbath school furnishes. The ignorance and the indolence of many parents may shelter themselves under the wing of the Sabbath school; and even natural affection may plead for an exemption from this duty, by intrusting the performance of it to those who are supposed to be more capable of discharging it.

Parents may also think themselves excused from personally instructing their children, on account of the irregularity with which their own instructions would have to be imparted. By not rightly distributing their time, or by not rigidly adhering to a right distribution, they find various things interfering with each other, and not unfrequently some of their duties wholly neglected; and the long intervals which occur are specially injurious to their children's advancement in the knowledge of the Bible. By irregularity and various sorts of mismanagement, the waywardness of their children increases, and the parents may come at length to the settled belief, (and perhaps in their case, after having spoiled their children, it may be true,) that almost any one can do more good to their children, than they can themselves. But whatever may be said of the Sabbath school as furnishing a system of correctives for children who have been the victims of such mismanagement, it is certain that those parents greatly err, who deliberately neglect the religious instruction of their children, at a very early period, in consequence of the provisions which Sabbath schools furnish. The truth is, these schools are intended not to supersede, but to assist domestic instruction, and nothing can be plainer than that the benefits of Sabbath schools must be exceedingly restricted, unless the scholars receive at home instruction that may prepare them for the school, and instruction suited to deepen the impression which the school exercises may make. I fear also that pa-

rents who may be willing to relieve themselves of responsibility by placing it upon others, will directly counteract the good which they profess to desire for their children from the Sabbath school, and which they flatter themselves will more readily be gained from the school, than from parental instruction; for such a shrinking from responsibility, or rather such a glad withdrawing of themselves from it, will have a baleful influence upon their whole characters, and will produce in numerous particulars, a carelessness of conduct, and an unconcern respecting the example they set before their children.

The true interests of the rising generation, then, and no less the true interests of Sabbath Schools, require that parents should cherish a deep sense of their personal responsibility, and should regard the Sabbath school chiefly as a most valuable auxiliary to their own efforts. The altar of domestic devotion must not be deserted, because we can resort to the public altar of the sanctuary. Upon no pretence must the vivifying heat of family religion be chilled. The assiduities of parental care cannot safely be superseded by any other anxiety, by any other diligence, however intense, however constant. Let parents, then, be continually reminded, that while divine authority proclaims, 'Children obey your parents in the Lord;' the same authority proclaims with a plainness which cannot be misunderstood, and an urgency which must never be unheeded, 'Ye fathers bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' Whatever other persons may do in the training up of children, upon parents is laid an injunction from the High and Holy one. Let parents feel the force of this injunction, and in their endeavors to comply with it, let them avail themselves of the advantages which the Sabbath school furnishes; and remember too, that the increase of advantages for rightly training their children, increases their obligations to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

I have mentioned an error into which parents may

be led; and now let me direct your thoughts to one into which pastors may fall.

It has always appeared to me of immense importance that a pastor should endeavor to maintain a very intimate and affectionate intercourse with the children of his congregation. These constitute the most interesting, in many respects, and the most hopeful part of his charge. If, at an early period, he acquires their confidence and produces in their minds a conviction that he is their friend, their affectionate well-wisher, their willing and patient benefactor, with how much profit may he believe that in after-life they will listen to his instructions; how slow will they be to abandon him for a teacher of a different faith; with how much confidence may he anticipate that with many of them he shall sit down in the kingdom of his Saviour.

It is a mistake, I fear, that children will, as a matter of course, regard their minister with affectionate reverence and confidence. They may indeed regard him with distant respect and awe. Thinking of him only in connection with the services of religion, and as the individual who has not unfrequently caused their consciences to give them pain, they may feel uneasy in his presence; they may endeavor to avoid his sight, and even subject themselves to no little inconvenience in order to escape his observation. Some effort, then, is needed on his part to produce an attachment to his person. His pastoral visitation of families, if judiciously conducted, will do somewhat towards gaining their affections. The esteem which their parents manifest towards him will exert an additional influence. But to these let there be added regular opportunities of meeting the children in an affectionate and tender manner for religious instruction and advice; and I cannot but think a very desirable state of feeling will exist both in the pastor and in the children.

But, as it is in the case of parents, so it is in the case of pastors. Too many of them are not wholly free from a willingness to diminish their cares, and to

presume that, although in different circumstances it would be an indispensable duty to exercise a personal supervision over the children, yet, as religious instruction is so copiously imparted in the Sabbath school, the work is accomplished to better effect than it could be by their exertions. It is indeed done to better effect by the Sabbath school arrangements than it was done previously to the existence of Sabbath schools; but it is not done to so much effect as it would be, if to the weekly efforts of the school teacher, were added the monthly attentions of the pastor.

Nor can it be justly said in excuse for this neglect on the part of pastors, that the arrangements for Bible class instruction furnish sufficient opportunities for bringing the pastor into intimate connection with the youthful part of his society. Of the value of Bible class instruction, and of its happily supplying a void that had existed for ages, I am very sensible. But it is not enough that the pastor form an intimate acquaintance with the young, and exert his influence over them in the form of a Bible class. For a large number, though at an early period connected with the Sabbath school, do not become members of a Bible class. Especially is this true respecting lads who sooner leave the paternal roof, and are exposed to more powerful temptations than their sisters, and who, moreover, frequently at an unsuitable age, are removed to a distance from parents, and placed in circumstances almost entirely new. How desirable, then, that the assiduous care of pastors should be extended towards them at that which may well be called the forming period of their lives. Again, how often does the bloom of childhood yield to the paleness of death! The little immortal comes forth as a flower, and is cut down. Would it not be a pleasant reflection to the pastor, as he is consoling the afflicted parents, as he looks upon the coffin which contains the desire of their eyes, would it not be a pleasant reflection, that that child knew him, and loved him, and confided in him; that that child he had often met in company with others, for purposes of the highest import; that

for the salvation of that child he had often felt earnest desires, and poured forth fervent prayers?

I would affectionately suggest it for your consideration, whether pastors ought not occasionally, and without long intervals, to be present in the Sabbath school, and to show the interest which they feel in the instruction of the young; and whether, besides this occasional attendance, they ought not to appoint stated times for meeting the children, either in order to review the Sabbath school lessons, or to impart different, though kindred instruction.

For a most judicious and instructive view of various particulars that call for the parent's attention, see Letters on Christian Education; by a Mother. They constitute a Tract, (Number 73,) of the series published by the Baptist General Tract Society.

No. 108.

THE

CHRISTIAN'S STEWARDSHIP.

BY R. W. CUSHMAN, A. M.

It is necessary that Christians begin to use their property as stewards. The principles of the Gospel must be carried into the business of our every day expenditure. We must sacrifice to Christ our love of pleasure, of ostentation, of accumulation,—or we cease to pray "Thy kingdom come." WAYLAND.

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THE CHRISTIAN'S STEWARDSHIP.

Two facts are observable, in the walks of life, which strikingly correspond to declarations in the Bible, concerning two descriptions of character. The first is, that those, whether rich or poor, who have a conscientious respect to the temporal and spiritual necessities of their fellow-men, and to the will of their Creator in the use and disposal of their possessions, have the purest and most lively enjoyment of the blessings of this life; and drink most abundantly of the pure stream of consolation which flows from the throne of God. The scripture that corresponds with this fact is, "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

He, on the contrary, whether unregenerate or christian, who, turning his attention from the Divine will, determines the manner of using and disposing of his property by his own desires and partialities, and consigns to the control of his pride and ambition that portion which humility and confidence in God would relinquish to the relief of the needy; knows least of the enjoyments which flow from earth or heaven.—And this fact corresponds with the declaration, "There is that withholdeth more than is meet; but it tendeth to poverty."

The first character is that most frequently witnessed, when the powers of the soul are first rectified by the renewing of the Holy Spirit:—when the heart is first elevated to "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." The latter is an instance of degeneracy, produced by the maxims of a world which, amid all the demonstrations of an overruling providence that surround us, knows not God. The former receives the blessings of Heaven as a gift; and enjoys them with all the zest which a lively

gratitude can impart: while the latter receives them as a matter of course, and a matter of right, and discovers not, or heeds not, the kind hand which bestows them. How greatly is it to be deplored that the last description of character is so prevalent as it is, among those who have been redeemed, not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ! For, what might not the energies of the Christian host effect, with the promised blessing of God, were but those energies all aroused and properly directed!

This degeneracy is a consequence of inattention to the origin of our mercies, and forgetfulness of our absolute dependence on God, even for the most ordinary and constant streams of prosperity with which our lives are refreshed.

There is a fondness in the heart for whatsoever presents itself in the shape of an antidote to the ills of life, and as a means of promoting our happiness; and consequently a proneness to suffer the attention to be engrossed with the *gift*, while the Giver, because unseen, is forgotten. Hence it comes to pass, that we look on what we possess as *our own:* to be held by us, our heirs, and assigns, forever; in fee simple of man, and quit claim of God: and whenever the idea of obligation is brought before the mind, we are apt to ask, as if neither man nor God had a right to negative the question: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?—to save or destroy; to give or withhold?" From this source has arisen a ruinous mistake in the calculations of many, concerning the *extent of our accountability.* While it is admitted that we must give an account of the *deeds* done in the body, according to their moral character; it is forgotten that this accountability is, in any manner, regulated by the circumstances of temporal blessings in which the providence of God has placed us: that we are *stewards* of his goods, and have to give an account of our stewardship. Hence, while the rightful claim of Heaven to that obedience, the capacity of rendering which lies equally in the breasts of all, is admitted; the relinquishment of any portion of property for the promotion of the cause of truth, or for the relief of distress, is con-

sidered as a free gift, which entitles the giver not only to the gratitude of the object aided, but to a score of credit in the book of his account with God.

Now this is an error which loudly demands correction: inasmuch as, in some, it is to be feared that it is the ground of a false confidence of their acceptance with God, by the preponderance of their charities against their transgressions: while in multitudes of those who have fled for refuge to a better hope, it subjects the heart to the pride of life, and consequently often shuts the hand, while the voice of duty, which bids bestow, is unheard. The most effectual method to correct these evils is, to consider attentively and habitually,

The character we sustain:

The source of our prosperity:

The nature of our tenure; and,

The responsibilities with which it is connected.

In contemplating our character, we should remember that we are but men: the wealthiest, the proudest, the mightiest of us, is but a man: a creature who, but yesterday, embarked on the sea of life with nothing but ignorance and helplessness; a common adventurer, among the thousands of his kind, amid the perils and uncertainties of the winds and the waves: and who, even in the day of his greatest strength and loftiest pride, can neither persuade nor terrify the minister of disease, nor resist the demands of death, nor beguile the worm of his prey. In all his glory, he is but dust and to the dust he must return.

Now if we brought nothing into the world, it be hooves us to consider how we came into possession of that which he have. Under the influence of the error of which we have spoken, the Farmer will tell us that he has arisen to a comfortable independence by his own industry,—"by the sweat of his brow:" and, that the hard earned products of his labour he knows how to value, and he knows how to keep. But we would ask, of what avail is all his labour? Does it dissolve the

snows of winter, and break the chains in which the earth is held? Does it move forward the revolutions of the seasons from winter to seed-time, and from seed-time to harvest? Does it raise the vapours from the earth and ocean, and mould them into clouds? Does it bring down the rain, "the former and the latter rain?" Does it cause the sun to warm the bosom of the ground into which he casts his seed? Then why does he ever labour for nought, or spend his strength in vain?

We suppose it was while he was asleep that the blasting and mildew destroyed his hopes: and because he was ignorant of the mischief, that the fly took the blossom, and the worm, the root. Oh, no! He who gave light and joy to the land of Goshen, and darkness and pestilence and death to Egypt; HE it is who rolls on the seasons: who commands the wintry blast from his northern stores, or gives the glowing breath of summer skies.

> At his command the morning ray
> Smiles on the earth and leads the day;
> *He* guides the sun's declining wheels
> Over the tops of western hills.
>
> Seasons and times obey His voice:—
> The evening and the morn rejoice
> To see the earth made soft with show'rs,
> Laden with fruit, and dressed in flow'rs.

The MERCHANT, whose warehouses are filled with goods, is apt to feel no less freedom from obligation than the yeoman; and when interrogated, whence he received them, will be likely to tell us that he purchased them; that he imported them. But who, we would ask, prospered your industry with the means? Who gave to your canvass the favouring wind which wafted them to you: and, why did not He who blessed you with gentle gales, meet you with impoverishing whirlwinds and devouring tempests?

The prosperity of the MECHANIC, is the result of the industrious exercise of his muscular powers and of his skill. But we would ask him whence came these powers, and whence this skill? That they are not among the inseparable endowments of humanity you may

learn by a visit to the abode of the idiot; the cell of the lunatic; and the couch, where the victims of agues, consumptions, and fevers lie agonizing and helpless.

The Physician advances in reputation, and in the confidence of the community, and consequently in wealth, by the happy exercise of his professional skill. But whence hath this man this wisdom? Omitting to say any thing of his accomplishments in the *theory* of physic, which, amid the ten thousand diversified forms and shades of character that disease assumes, is, of itself, of so little avail; how came he into the possession of that quick and nice discernment, by which he so successfully detects the lurking foe in the machinery of the human frame; ascertains his direction and his power; and by which he is enabled to apply the appropriate and timely remedy, to stay the work of destruction, and to repair the injury sustained?

The Counsellor and the Statesman are crowned with honour; and with a meet reward for their successful support of the rights and the interests with which they have been entrusted. But, from whom did they receive that retentiveness of memory which secures the fund of knowledge they have laboured for years to obtain? Who gave them that vigorous comprehension; that rapidity of conception; that liveliness of feeling; that promptitude; that grace; that force of communication; which at once enlighten the understanding, control the judgment, and captivate the heart? —All, all is the boon of Heaven: the Farmer, the Merchant, the Mechanic, the Physician, the Counsellor, the Statesman, all are endowed with whatsoever of prosperity, of favour they possess, by the "Father of lights from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift."

It being then conceded, that for whatever of worldly blessings we possess, we are indebted to the bounty of God; let us consider,

The nature of the tenure by which we hold them.

Nothing can be more certain than this; that if we hold any thing by absolute right, it would be absolutely wrong for any man to wrest it from us. It is equally

certain, that if we hold our possessions by a right as perfect with respect to God, as we do with respect to man, Jehovah himself has no right to take them from us without our consent. If he *does* therefore take them, either the God of justice has became unjust; or, our right is, by our very adversities, proved imperfect.

But it is certain that riches *do* take to themselves wings and fly away: that the conflagration sometimes wraps them in ruin, and consigns their owners to wretchedness and sorrow. It is certain that the tempests and the floods, sometimes do sweep our floating treasures to "the dark unfathomed caves of ocean." It is certain that the scorching sun consumes the husbandman's hope; and that after all his labours of sowing and planting, and his watchful care—after he has done his utmost, the seed is sometimes "rotten under the clod; the garners are laid desolate; the barns are broken down, for the corn is withered; and the beasts groan, and the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture: and the flocks of sheep are made desolate and the beasts of the field cry unto God, for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness."

It is certain that the insect tribes of the air, in alliance with the creeping inhabitants of the ground, which the God of judgment calls his great army, do march forth in dark and fearful array; and "that which the palmer-worm hath left, hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left, hath the canker-worm eaten; and that which the canker-worm hath left, hath the caterpillar eaten." Yet the God of judgment—the God of the winds and of the waves, the fire and the tempest,—the leader of this desolating and irresistible army, is a "God of truth, without iniquity; just and right is he." And we have as little right to question his doings, as power to stay his hand: and, in the midst of all, we are bound to cherish the sentiment and the temper of a sufferer of ancient time: "the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

Brethren, examine the character, and the sufferings, of the man whose words we have just quoted; and you

will learn that we are tenants at will. Now, that we are amenable to God for the use we make of his bounties, is a reasonable and necessary consequence of the tenure by which we hold them. The truth is, they are, strictly speaking, *His:* and are committed to our *trust*, to be used and disposed of, by us, in accordance with his revealed will.

That they are not bestowed to be employed as our own predilections and our often erroneous judgments of our interests shall prompt, is evident.

The very idea of prosperity is connected with the promotion of happiness: and as all real prosperity comes from God, the bestowment of wealth, which preserves from many of the ills incident to life, and which ministers to our innocent enjoyments, is a clear indication of his benevolence, and of his design in giving them for our use.

No one can doubt that the Almighty clothes the earth with verdure, and covers the fields with waving plenty, for the promotion of the *happiness* of his creatures.

But the good which the husbandman possesses is only a single variety of that wealth, all the varieties of which spring from the same source, and are all imparted for the same end.

He who is prospered with more than is requisite for the attainment of his own happiness, has received the surplus for the same general end for which the rest was given: he is therefore entrusted with the means of happiness to others. Consequently, he is not at liberty to cast it into the fire, to bury it in the earth, or to merge it in the flood: nor, least of all, is he at liberty to make it subservient to the violation of the laws of God the giver, in licentious prodigality.

Perhaps there is no disposition more prevalent among those who are under the influence of moral principles at all, than that which prompts them to accumulate wealth for their posterity. Now, if this disposition, to the extent to which it is generally indulged, received the Divine approbation; the indulgence of it would tend to the *promotion of happiness*—the happiness of the parents, as following out the direction of God's plea-

sure: and the happiness of the children, as coming into the possession of an unperverted trust.

But, that you may judge whether this object *is* attained by the spirit of accumulation which is abroad in society, we would have you take a tour of minute and careful observation through the different walks of life. Go, read the histories of families from the father to the son: and the history of the son from infancy to manhood. Trace the effects which meet your daily notice, up to their legitimate, but frequently, not obvious causes. Consider, on the one hand, the condition and the real enjoyments of those who, possessing a competency, exchange the redundance of their income, for the pleasure of doing good; either in the way of enlightening the ignorant, or in reclaiming the vicious, or in feeding the hungry, or in clothing the naked and succouring the distressed. Observe their early and well-formed habits of activity, which are so conducive to health—the basis of all sublunary enjoyment. Witness the flow of their spirits; and their contentment, which remains undisturbed amid all the enticements of the influence and honors of fortune. Mark well the sound constitutions and the industrious habits of their rising posterity; who expect, from their parents, no more than a frugal beginning in life, depending for their subsequent prosperity, on the faithful practice of those lessons of industry and virtue, with which their tender minds were imbued by parental piety.

Consider, we say, and compare this course of procedure and its attendant blessings, with that in which the cumbrous accumulation of wealth, and the aggrandizement of family by the privileges of fortune, are the objects of supreme regard: where the avarice of gain steels the heart against the voice of imploring woe, and locks up from its own enjoyment, the abundance already possessed:—where luxury pours its poisons into the cup of infancy, and is the companion of the nursery and the physician of childhood: where youth, unacquainted with the checks of that happy medium which is independence to virtue, but poverty to vice, is accustomed to every gratification which wealth abused

can bring: and, Oh! would to God ten thousand melancholy examples did not compel us to proceed—where deliverance from all concern about a livelihood, lifts the youthful mind above all feeling of dependence on man or God; raises the floodgate of every passion, and turns the whole mind and soul adrift in a sea of licentious pleasure, ending in poverty and pain, a constitution shattered and broken, and a soul in despair

Compare the two descriptions, and we think it will be no difficult matter for a common discernment to determine in favour of which system of procedure the balance of substantial enjoyment turns. On that side rests the approbation of God, for it is that which accomplishes the end for which his bounties are conferred. And on the other falls his frown, for his goods have been perverted to forbidden purposes.

In the very miseries, therefore, consequent upon such a perversion, or, if you will, in the very constitution of nature, by which the blessings of Jehovah are, in their abuse, transformed into curses, we recognise both his right and his intention to call us to account for the manner in which we have used them.

It being then established, that we have received from him every good we possess, that so far from his relinquishing his right in the bounty, he has made us accountable for the use and disposal of the whole, and that the bestowment confers not only obligations of gratitude but of *service;* the question becomes, to every honest steward of the Creator's bounties, a matter of deeply interesting inquiry:—How MUCH *do I owe to my Lord?* For, on whatever objects I expend that which he has entrusted to me, and whatever responsibilities these favours may impose *on them;* still I have to account to God for all I have received at his hand. A *portion* of what he has given me is undoubtedly to be "occupied" for the promotion of my own happiness, and the happiness of those whom he has entrusted to my care: but what proportion is best calculated for the attainment of this end, and what he has required to be expended for *Him:*—are questions which demand my most impartial and prayerful investigation.

Yes! they are questions the importance of which is

magnifed by all the pleasure of doing good, and by all the peace of a conscience void of offence towards God; and by all the terrors of being weighed in the balance of his justice and found wanting:—questions, Brethren, which, thankfully remembering how great the disparity between what you *receive* at his hand, and what, as imperfect and sinful, you *merit*, you must determine by the light which the Bible throws on your responsibilities, and which the records of providence shed on the designs of your Benefactor in the dispensations of his gifts.

And having ascertained the extent of your obligations, suffer yourselves to be induced to the discharge of them. Oh, by all the considerations of gratitude, by all the motives of self-enjoyment, and by all the impulses of self-interest as well as of duty, suffer yourselves to be stimulated to a prompt discharge of those obligations, in promoting the temporal and spiritual welfare of your fellow-men.

We say, of self-enjoyment, because that undue anxiety for accumulation, which resists the demands of Charity and Religion, is destructive of the finest feelings, and the richest bliss of the soul: and if it does not deliver it to the lashes of conscience, it renders it an utter stranger to that pure and godlike pleasure which springs from doing good. And we have said, of self-interest, because the Christian who is growing rich, by withholding what the Lord demands, is absolutely growing poor, by confining the enjoyment of his wealth, to the short portion of his existence which he passes on earth: while it is in his power to export his possessions to the shores of eternity. Yes, Brethren, there is such a thing as almost literally laying up our treasures in heaven. "I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."—I say unto you secure the friendship and gratitude of those who are poor in this world but rich in faith, by contributing from that which so many hoard and worship, to the relief of their temporal, and spiritual necessities: that when ye die, those whom you have blessed, and who have gone before

you may hail you with grateful joy, and bid you welcome to the mansions of everlasting rest. Here then, the bliss of the world above will be affected in a most interesting point by your works of charity below; and the pleasures which burn in the beneficent bosom on earth are to be re-kindled in the world to come.

But above all things else, Brethren, be incited to a diligent and faithful discharge of the duties of your stewardship, by the consideration of that greatest gift to you, which Heaven ever gave to man. Consider that "he who was rich, *for your sakes*, became poor, that you through his poverty, might be made rich:" rich in everlasting habitations; rich in spotless robes of righteousness; rich in unfading diadems of glory; rich in a right to the tree of life, and the crystal waters that flow from the throne of God.

And in anticipation of your robe and crown, your habitation and rest, in that land where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal, where the flames cannot devour, nor nor the hand of time deface, rise to your duty: and what your hand findeth to do, do it with your might.

The cause of suffering humanity entreats your aid. Remember the poor whom ye have always with you; and to whom, *whensoever ye will*, ye may do good. Whensoever ye will, ye may deliver the fatherless, and him that hath none to help him: whensoever ye will, ye may cause the widow's heart to sing for joy, and the blessing of him that is ready to perish to come upon yourselves.

The period has been foretold when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. That period is at hand: and most animating must the reflection be to every friend of God. But it must not be forgotten, that it is through the instrumentality of the saints, that the Redeemer is to diffuse the knowledge of his grace among the nations, and bring the world into subjection, under the reign of his love. The age and circumstances then, in which we live, call for pre-eminent Christian activity, and a consecration of heart and life, of talents and wealth to Him, whose we are, and whom we serve.